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VOLUME I

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MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Beroot
Saide
Tyre
Libanus
Antilibanus
Bay of Acre
Point Carmel
Nazareth
Hattin
Tiberias
Lake Tiberias or Sea of Galilee
Brisan
Nablous
Cesarea
Rama
Jaffa
Bethany
Ashdod
JERUSALEM
Bethlehem
Jericho
Askalaan
Tekoa
JUDEA
Hebron
Gaza
Jordan
Dead Sea
Old Sebennytic Mouth
Damietta
Mouth
Rosetta
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ALEXANDRIA
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Arab Tower
Site of Lake Mareotis
Desert
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ARABIA PETRÆA
Oyster Re
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Ra El Gib
Ancient Station
Bedel Es Serag
Quarries
Lead Mine
Arab tribe of Bradeh
EGYPT,
ARABIA PETRÆA,
AND THE
HOLY LAND.

INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL

IN

EGYPT, ARABIA PETRÆA, &c.

CHAPTER I.

Alexandria.—Pompey's Pillar.—The Catacombs.—The Warwick Vase.—The Pacha's Canal.—Boats of the Nile.

On the afternoon of the —— December, 1835, after a passage of five days from Malta, I was perched up in the rigging of an English schooner, spyglass in hand, and earnestly looking for the "Land of Egypt." The captain had never been there before; but we had been running several hours along the low coast of Barbary, and the chart and compass told us that we could not be far from the fallen city of Alexander. Night came on, however, without our seeing it. The ancient Pharos, the Lantern of Ptolemy, the eighth wonder of the world, no longer throws its light far over the bosom of the sea to guide the weary mariner.

Morning came, and we found ourselves directly opposite the city, the shipping in the outward harbour, and the fleet of the pacha riding at anchor under the walls of the seraglio, carrying me back in imagination to the days of the Macedonian conqueror, of Cleopatra and the Ptolemies. Slowly we worked our way up the difficult and dangerous channel, unaided by a pilot, for none appeared to take us in charge. It is a fact worthy of note, that one of the monuments of Egypt's proudest days, the celebrated Pompey's Pillar, is even now, after a lapse of more than two thousand years, one of the landmarks which guide the sailor to her fallen capital. Just as we had passed the last reef pilots came out to meet us, their swarthy faces, their turbans, their large dresses streaming in the wind, and their little boat with its huge latteen sail, giving a strange wildness to their appearance, the effect of which was not a little heightened by their noise and confusion in attempting to come alongside. Failing in their first endeavour, our captain gave them no assistance, and when they came upon us again he refused to admit them on board. The last arrival at Malta had brought unfavourable accounts of the plague, and he was unwilling to run any risk until he should have an opportunity of advising with his consignee. My servant was the only person on board who could speak Arabic; and telling the wild, fly-away looking Arabs to fasten on astern, we towed our pilots in, and at about eight o'clock came to anchor in the

harbour. In half an hour I was ashore, and the moment I touched it, just as I had found at Constantinople, all the illusion of the distant view was gone.

Indeed, it would be difficult for any man who lives at all among the things of this world, to dream of the departed glory of Egypt when first entering the fallen city of Alexander; the present and the things of the present are uppermost; and between ambling donkeys, loaded camels, dirty, half-naked, sore-eyed Arabs, swarms of flies, yelping dogs, and apprehensions of the plague, one thinks more of his own movements than of the pyramids. I groped my way through a long range of bazars to the Frank quarter, and here, totally forgetting what I had come for, and that there were such things as obelisks, pyramids, and ruined temples, the genius of my native land broke out, and, with an eye that had had some experience in such matters at home, I contemplated the "improvements;" a whole street of shops kept by Europeans and filled with European goods, ranges of fine buildings, fine country houses and gardens growing upon barren sands, showed that strangers from a once barbarous land were repaying the debt which the world owes to the mother of arts, and raising her from the ruin into which she had been plunged by years of misrule and anarchy.

My first visit was to Mr. Gliddon, the American consul, whose reception of me was such that I felt already as one not alone in a strange land. While

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with him an English gentleman came in—a merchant in Alexandria—who was going that night to Cairo. Mr. Gliddon introduced us; and, telling him that I too was bound for Cairo, Mr. T. immediately proposed that I should accompany him, saying he had a boat and every thing ready, and that I might save myself the trouble of making any preparations, and would have nothing to do but come on board with my luggage at sundown. Though rather a short notice, I did not hesitate to accept his offer. Besides the relief from trouble in fitting out, the plague was in every one's mouth, and I was not sorry to have so early an opportunity of escaping from a city where, above all others, "pestilence walketh in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noonday."

Having but a short time before me, I immediately mounted a donkey—an Egyptian donkey—being an animal entirely unknown to us, or even in Europe, and, accompanied by my servant, with a sore-eyed Arab boy to drive us, I started off upon a full gallop to make a hasty survey of the ruins of Alexandria. The Frank quarter is the extreme part of the city, and a very short ride brought us into another world. It was not until now, riding in the suburbs upon burning sands and under a burning sun, that I felt myself really in the land of Egypt. It was not in fact till standing at the base of Pompey's Pillar, that I felt myself among the ruins of one of the greatest cities of the world. Reaching it through long rows of Arab huts, where

poverty, and misery, and famine, and nakedness stared me in the face, one glance at its majestic height told me that this was indeed the work of other men and other times. Standing on a gentle elevation, it rises a single shaft of ninety feet, and ten feet in diameter, surmounted by a Corinthian capital ten feet high, and, independent of its own monumental beauty, it is an interesting object as marking the centre of the ancient city. It stands far outside the present walls, and from its base you may look over a barren waste of sand, running from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Lake Mareotis, the boundaries of Alexandria as it was of old.

All this intermediate space of sandy hills, alternating with hollows, was once covered with houses, palaces, and perhaps with monuments, equal in beauty to that at whose base I stood. Riding over that waste, the stranger sees broken columns, crumbling walls, and fragments of granite and marble, thrusting themselves above their sandy graves, as if struggling for resurrection; on one side he beholds a yawning chasm in which forty or fifty naked Arabs are toiling to disentomb a column long buried in the sand; on another an excavated house, with all its walls and apartments almost as entire as when the ancient Egyptian left it. He is riding over a mighty sepulchre, the sepulchre of a ruined city, and at every step some tell-tale monument is staring at him from the grave.

Riding slowly among the ruins, I passed the cel-

ebrated wells built in the time of Alexander, at the very foundation of the city, at which generation after generation have continued to slake their thirst, and ended my ride at Cleopatra's Needle, a beautiful obelisk sixty feet high, full of mysterious hieroglyphics that mock the learning of the wise of our day. Time has dealt lightly with it; on one side the characters stand bold and clear as when it came from the hands of the sculptor, although, on the other, the dread sirocco, blowing upon it from the desert more than two thousand years, has effaced the sculptor's marks, and worn away the almost impenetrable granite. By its side, half buried in the sand, lies a fallen brother, of the same size and about the same age, said to have been taken down by the English many years ago, for the purpose of being carried to England; but the pacha prevented it, and since that time it has lain in fallen majesty, stretching across a deep chasm formed by excavations around it.

At six o'clock I was riding with my new friend, spurring my donkey to its utmost to get out of the city before the gate should close; and my reader will acquit me of all intention of writing a book, when I tell him that a little after dark of the same day on which I arrived at Alexandria, I was on my way to Cairo. Accident, however, very unexpectedly brought me again to Alexandria; and on my second visit, while waiting for an opportunity to return to Europe, I several times went over the same ground, more at my leisure, and vis-

ited the other objects of interest which my haste had before prevented me from seeing.

Among these were the Catacombs, situated about two miles from the city, on the edge of the Libyan Desert, and near the shore of the sea. These great repositories of the dead are so little known, that we had some difficulty in finding them, although we inquired of everybody whom we met. Seeing an Arab brushing some horses near an opening in the side of the rock, we went to him to inquire, and found we were at the door of the Catacombs. The real entrance is now unknown, but was probably from above. The present is a rude forced breach, and the first chamber into which we entered, a chamber built with pious regard to the repose of the dead, we found occupied as a stable for the horses of one of the pacha's regiments. My donkey-boy had taken the precaution to bring with him candles, and a line to tie at the entrance, after the manner of Fair Rosamond's clew, to save us from being lost in the labyrinth of passages; but the latter was unnecessary, as the Arabs employed about the horses had explored them so thoroughly for purposes of plunder, that they were sufficiently sure guides. Taking two of them into pay, we followed with our lighted torches through two chambers, which, to me, who had then seen the tombs in Thebes, Petra, and Jerusalem, contained nothing remarkable, and came to what has been called the state chamber, a circular room about thirty feet in diameter, with three recesses, one at each side of

the door and one opposite, a vaulted roof, and altogether admirably fine in its proportions. In each of the recesses were niches for the bodies of the dead, and in one of them sculls and mouldering bones were still lying on the ground. Following my guides, I passed through several chambers half filled with sand; but having by this time lost much of my ardour for wandering among tombs, and finding the pursuit unprofitable and unsatisfactory, I returned to the state chamber and left the Catacombs.

They are supposed to extend many miles under the surface, but how far will probably never be known. The excavations that have as yet been made are very trifling; and unless the enlightened pacha should need the state chamber for his horses, the sands of the desert may again creep upon them, and shut them for ever from our eyes.

Near the door of the entrance, directly on the edge of the shore, are chambers cut in the rocks, which open to the sea, called by the imposing name of Cleopatra's Baths. It is rather an exposed situation, and, besides the view from the sea, there are several places where "peeping Tom" might have hidden himself quite conveniently. It is a rude place, too; and when I was there, the luxurious queen could hardly have got to her chambers without at least wetting her royal feet; in fact, not to be imposed upon by names, a lady of the present day can have a more desirable bath for a quarter of

a dollar, than ever the Queen of the East had in her life.

The present city of Alexandria, even after the dreadful ravages made by the plague last year, is still supposed to contain more than 50,000 inhabitants, and is decidedly growing. It stands outside the delta in the Libyan Desert, and, as Volney remarks, "It is only by the canal which conducts the waters of the Nile into the reservoirs in the time of inundation, that Alexandria can be considered as connected with Egypt." Founded by the great Alexander, to secure his conquests in the East, being the only safe harbour along the coast of Syria or Africa, and possessing peculiar commercial advantages, it soon grew into a giant city. Fifteen miles in circumference, containing a population of 300,000 citizens and as many slaves, one magnificent street 2000 feet broad ran the whole length of the city, from the Gate of the Sea to the Canopie Gate, commanding a view, at each end, of the shipping, either in the Mediterranean or in the Mareotic Lake, and another of equal length intersected it at right angles; a spacious circus without the Canopie Gate, for chariot-races, and on the east a splendid gymnasium, more than six hundred feet in length, with theatres, baths, and all that could make it a desirable residence for a luxurious people. When it fell into the hands of the Saracens, according to the report of the Saracen general to the Calif Omar, "It was impossible to enumerate the variety of its riches and beauty;" and it is said to "have con-

tained four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, four hundred theatres or public edifices, twelve thousand shops, and forty thousand tributary Jews." From that time, like every thing else which falls into the hands of the Mussulman, it has been going to ruin, and the discovery of the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope gave the death-blow to its commercial greatness. At present it stands a phenomenon in the history of a Turkish dominion. It appears once more to be raising its head from the dust. It remains to be seen whether this rise is the legitimate and permanent effect of a wise and politic government, combined with natural advantages, or whether the pacha is not forcing it to an unnatural elevation, at the expense, if not upon the ruins, of the rest of Egypt. It is almost presumptuous, on the threshold of my entrance into Egypt, to speculate upon the future condition of this interesting country; but it is clear that the pacha is determined to build up the city of Alexandria if he can: his fleet is here, his army, his arsenal, and his forts are here, and he has forced and centred here a commerce that was before divided between several places. Rosetta has lost more than two thirds of its population. Damietta has become a mere nothing, and even Cairo the Grand has become tributary to what is called the regenerated city.

Alexandria has also been the scene of interesting events in modern days. Here the long-cherished animosity of France and England sought a

new battle-field, as if conscious that the soil of Europe had too often been moistened with human blood. Twice I visited the spot where the gallant Abercrombie fell, about two miles outside the Rosetta Gate; the country was covered with a beautiful verdure, and the Arab was turning up the ground with his plough; herds of buffalo were quietly grazing near, and a caravan of camels was slowly winding its way along the borders of a nameless lake, which empties into the Lake Mareotis. Farther on and near the sea is a large square enclosure, by some called the ruins of the palace of Cleopatra, by others the camp of Cesar. This was the French position, and around it the battle was fought. All is quiet there now, though still the curious traveller may pick up from time to time balls, fragments of shells, or other instruments of death, which tell him that war, murderous and destructive war has been there.

My last ride was to Pompey's Pillar. Chateaubriand requested a friend to write his name upon the great pyramid, not being able to go to it himself, and considering this one of the duties of a pious pilgrim; but I imagine that sentimental traveller did not mean it in the sense in which "Hero" and "Beatrice," and the less romantic name of "Susannah Wilson," are printed in great black letters, six inches long, about half way up the shaft.

There can be no doubt that immense treasures are still buried under the ruins of Alexandria; but whether they will ever be discovered will depend

upon the pacha's necessities, as he may need the ruins of ancient temples for building forts or bridges. New discoveries are constantly made, and between my first and second visit a beautiful vase had been discovered, pronounced to be the original of the celebrated Warwick vase found at Adrian's villa, near Tivoli. It was then in the hands of the French consul, who told me he would not take its weight in gold for it. I have since seen the vase at Warwick castle; and if the one found at Alexandria is not the original, it is certainly remarkable that two sculptors, one in Egypt and the other in Italy, conceived and fashioned two separate works of art so exactly resembling each other.

But to return to the moment of my first leaving Alexandria. At dark I was on board a boat at the mouth of the Mahmoudie, the canal which connects Alexandria with the Nile; my companion had made all necessary provision for the voyage, and I had nothing to do but select a place and spread my mattress and coverlet. In a few minutes we had commenced our journey on the canal, our boat towed by our Arab boatmen, each with a rope across his breast. I have heard this canal spoken of as one of the greatest works of modern days, and I have seen it referred to as such in the books of modern travellers; and some even, as if determined to keep themselves under a delusion in regard to every thing in Egypt, speak of it as they do of the pyramids, and obelisks, and mighty

temples of the Upper Nile. The truth is, it is sixty miles in length, ninety feet in breadth, and eighteen in depth, through a perfectly level country, not requiring a single lock. In regard to the time in which it was made it certainly is an extraordinary work, and it could only have been done in that time, in such a country as Egypt, where the government is an absolute despotism, and the will of one man is the supreme law. Every village was ordered to furnish a certain quota ; 100,000 workmen were employed at once, and in a year from its commencement the whole excavation was made. As a great step in the march of public improvement it certainly does honour to the pacha, though, in passing along its banks, our admiration of a barbarian struggling into civilization is checked by remembering his wanton disregard of human life, and the melancholy fact that it proved the grave of more than ten thousand of his subjects.

We started in company with a Mr. Waghorn, formerly in the East India Company's service, now engaged in forwarding the mails from England to India by the Red Sea. He was one of the first projectors of that route, is a man of indefatigable activity and energy, and was the first courier sent from England with despatches over land. He travelled post to Trieste, took a Spanish vessel to Alexandria, and thence by dromedary to Cairo and Suez, where, not finding the vessel which had been ordered to meet him, and having with him a compass, his constant travelling companion, he

hired an open Arab boat, and, to the astonishment of his Arab crew, struck out into the middle of the Red Sea. At night they wanted, as usual, to anchor near the shore; but he sat with the helm in one hand and a cocked pistol in the other, threatening to shoot the first man that disobeyed his orders. On entering the harbour of Mocha he found an English government vessel on its way to meet him, and in the then uncommonly short time of fifty-five days delivered his despatches in Bombay.

At about eight o'clock next morning we were standing on the banks of the Nile, the eternal river, the river of Egypt, recalling the days of Pharaoh and Moses; from the earliest periods of recorded time watering and fertilizing a narrow strip of land in the middle of a sandy desert, rolling its solitary way more than a thousand miles without receiving a single tributary stream; the river which the Egyptians worshipped and the Arabs loved, and which, as the Mussulmans say, if Mohammed had tasted, "he would have prayed Heaven for terrestrial immortality, that he might continue to enjoy it for ever."

I cannot, however, join in the enthusiasm of the Mussulmans, for I have before me at this moment a vivid picture of myself and servant at Cairo, perched upon opposite divans covered with tawdry finery, in a huge barn of a room, with a ceiling thirty feet high, like two knights of the rueful countenance, comparing notes and bodily symptoms, and condoling with each other upon the cor-

poreal miseries brought upon us by partaking too freely of the water of the Nile.

The appearance of the river at the mouth of the canal is worthy of its historic fame. I found it more than a mile wide, the current at that season full and strong; the banks on each side clothed with a beautiful verdure and groves of palm-trees (the most striking feature in African scenery), and the village of Fouah, the stopping-place for boats coming up from Rosetta and Damietta, with its mosques, and minarets, and whitened domes, and groves of palms, forming a picturesque object in the view.

Upon entering the Nile we changed our boat, the new one being one of the largest and best on the river, of the class called canjiah, about seventy feet long, with two enormous latteen sails; these are triangular in form, and attached to two very tall spars more than a hundred feet long, heavy at the end, and tapering to a point; the spars or yards rest upon two short masts, playing upon them as on pivots. The spar rests at an angle of about thirty degrees, and, carrying the sail to its tapering point, gives the boat when under way a peculiarly light and graceful appearance. In the stern a small place is housed over, which makes a very tolerable cabin, except that the ceiling is too low to admit of standing upright, being made to suit the cross-legged habits of the Eastern people. She was manned by ten Arabs, good stout fellows, and a rais or captain.

CHAPTER II.

From Alexandria to Cairo.—Experience versus Travellers' Tales.—An unintended Bath.—Iron Rule of the Pacha.—Entrance into Cairo.—A Chat with a Pacha.

We commenced our voyage with that north wind which, books and travellers tell us, for nine months in the year continues to blow the same way, making it an easy matter to ascend from the Mediterranean to the cataracts, even against the strong current of the river; and I soon busied myself with meditating upon this extraordinary operation of nature, thus presenting itself to my observation at the very moment of my entrance into this wonderful country. It was a beautiful ordinance of Providence in regard to the feebleness and wants of man, that while the noble river rolled on eternally in one unbroken current, another agent of Almighty power should almost as constantly fill the flowing canvass, and enable navigators to stem the downward flow. I was particularly pleased with this train of reflection, inasmuch as at the moment we had much the best of it. We were ascending against the current at the rate of six or seven miles an hour, with a noise and dash through the water that made it seem like nine or ten, while the descending boats, with their spars taken out and sails tied close, were crawling down

almost imperceptibly, stern first, broadside first, not as the current carried them, but as the wind would let them. Our men had nothing to do; all day they lay strewed about on deck; towards evening they gathered around a large pilau of rice, and, as the sun was setting, one after the other, turning his face towards the tomb of the Prophet, kneeled down upon the deck and prayed. And thus passed my first night upon the famous river.

In the morning I found things not quite so well ordered; the wind seemed to be giving "premonitory symptoms" of an intention to chop about, and towards noon it came in dead ahead. After my self-complacent observations of yesterday, I would hardly credit it; but when it became so strong that we were obliged to haul alongside the bank and lie to, in order to avoid being driven down the stream, I was perfectly satisfied and convinced. We saw no more of our friend Mr. Waghorn; he had a small boat rigged with oars, and while we were vainly struggling against the wind and tide, he kindly left us to our fate. My companion was a sportsman, and happened to have on board a couple of guns; we went on shore with them, and the principal incident of the day that I remember is, that instead of fowler's, I had fisherman's luck. Rambling carelessly along, we found ourselves on the bank of a stream which it was necessary to cross; on the other side we saw a strapping Arab, and called to him to come and carry us over. Like most of his tribe, he was not troubled with

any superfluous clothing, and, slipping over his head the fragments of his frock, he was in a moment by our side, in all the majesty of nature. I started first, mounted upon his slippery shoulders, and went along very well until we had got more than half way over, when I began to observe an irregular tottering movement, and heard behind me the smothered laugh of my companion. I felt my Arab slowly and deliberately lowering his head; my feet touched the water; but with one hand I held my gun above my head, and with the other griped him by the throat. I found myself going, going, deeper and deeper, let down with the most studied deliberation, till all at once he gave his neck a sudden toss, jerked his head from under me, and left me standing up to my middle in the stream. I turned round upon him, hardly knowing whether to laugh or to strike him with the butt end of my gun; but one glance at the poor fellow was enough; the sweat stood in large drops on his face and ran down his naked breast; his knees shook, and he was just ready to drop himself. He had supported me as long as he could; but, finding himself failing, and fearing we should both come down together, with a splash, at full length, he had lowered me as gently as possible.

The banks of the Nile from here to Cairo furnish nothing interesting. On one side is the Delta, an extensive tract of low rich land, well cultivated and watered, and on the other a narrow strip of fertile land, and then the Libyan desert. The ruined

cities which attract the traveller into Egypt, their temples and tombs, the enduring monuments of its former greatness, do not yet present themselves. The modern villages are all built of mud or of unburnt bricks, and sometimes, at a distance, being surrounded by palm-trees, make a pleasing appearance; but this vanishes the moment you approach them. The houses, or rather huts, are so low that a man can seldom stand up in them, with a hole in the front like the door of an oven, into which the miserable Arab crawls, more like a beast than a being made to walk in God's image. The same spectacle of misery and wretchedness, of poverty, famine, and nakedness, which I had seen in the suburbs of Alexandria, continued to afflict me at every village on the Nile, and soon suggested the interesting consideration whether all this came from country and climate, from the character of the people, or from the government of the great reformer. At one place I saw on the banks of the river forty or fifty men, chained together with iron bands around their wrists, and iron collars around their necks. Yesterday they were peaceful Fellahs, cultivators of the soil, earning their scanty bread by hard and toilsome labour, but eating it at home in peace. Another day, and the stillness of their life is for ever broken; chased, run down, and caught, torn from their homes, from the sacred threshold of the mosque, the sword and musket succeed the implements of their quiet profession; they are carried away to fight battles in a

cause which does not concern them, and in which, if they conquer, they can never gain.

Returning to our boat on the brink of the river, a slight noise caught my ear; I turned, and saw a ragged mother kissing her naked child, while another of two years old, dirty and disgusting, was struggling to share its mother's embraces; their father I had just seen with an iron collar round his neck; and she loved these miserable children, and they loved their miserable mother, as if they were all clothed "in purple and fine raiment every day." But a few minutes after, a woman, knowing that we were "Franks," brought on board our boat a child, with a face and head so bloated with disease, that it was disgusting to look at. The rais took the child in his arms and brought it up to us, the whole crew following with a friendly interest. My companion gave them a bottle of brandy, with which the rais carefully bathed the face and head of the child, all the crew leaning over to help; and when they had finished to their satisfaction, these kind-hearted but clumsy nurses kissed the miserable bawling infant, and passed it, with as much care as if it had been a basket of crockery, into the hands of the grateful mother.

This scene was finely contrasted with one that immediately followed. The boat was aground, and in an instant, stripping their long gowns over their heads, a dozen large swarthy figures were standing naked on the deck; in a moment more they were splashing in the river, and with their

brawny shoulders under the bottom of the vessel, heaved her off the sand-bank. Near this we passed a long line of excavation where several hundred men were then digging, being part of the gigantic work of draining the Delta, lately undertaken by the pacha.

Towards the evening of the fourth day we came in sight of the "world's great wonder," the eternal Pyramids, standing at the head of a long reach in the river directly in front of us, and almost darkening the horizon; solitary, grand, and gloomy, the only objects to be seen in the great desert before us. The sun was about setting in that cloudless sky known only in Egypt; for a few moments their lofty summits were lighted by a gleam of lurid red, and, as the glorious orb settled behind the mountains of the Libyan desert, the atmosphere became dark and more indistinct, and their clear outline continued to be seen after the whole earth was shrouded in gloom.

The next morning at seven o'clock we were alongside the Island of Rhoda, as the Arab boatmen called it, where the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe and found the little Moses. We crossed over in a small boat to Boulac, the harbour of Cairo, breakfasted with Mr. J——, the brother-in-law of my friend, an engineer in the pacha's service, whose interesting wife is the only English lady there, and mounting a donkey, in half an hour I was within the walls of Grand Cairo. The traveller who goes there with the reminiscences of

Arabian tales hanging about him, will nowhere see the Cairo of the califs; but before arriving there he will have seen a curious and striking spectacle. He will have seen, streaming from the gate among loaded camels and dromedaries, the dashing Turk with his glittering sabre, the wily Greek, the grave Armenian, and the despised Jew, with their long silk robes, their turbans, their solemn beards, and various and striking costumes; he will have seen the harem of more than one rich Turk, eight or ten women on horseback, completely enveloped in large black silk wrappers, perfectly hiding face and person, and preceded by that abomination of the East, a black eunuch; the miserable santon, the Arab saint, with a few scanty rags on his breast and shoulders, the rest of his body perfectly naked; the swarthy Bedouin of the desert, the haughty janizary, with a cocked gun in his hand, dashing furiously through the crowd, and perhaps bearing some bloody mandate of his royal master; and perhaps he will have seen and blushed for his own image, in the person of some beggarly Italian refugee. Entering the gate, guarded by Arab soldiers in a bastard European uniform, he will cross a large square filled with officers and soldiers, surrounded by what are called palaces, but seeing nothing that can interest him, save the house in which the gallant Kleber, the hero of many a bloody field, died ingloriously by the hands of an assassin. Crossing this square, he will plunge into the narrow streets of Cairo. Winding his doubt-

ful and perilous way among tottering and ruined houses, justled by camels, dromedaries, horses, and donkeys, perhaps he will draw up against a wall, and, thinking of plague, hold his breath and screw himself into nothing, while he allows a corpse to pass, followed by a long train of howling women, dressed in black with masks over their faces; and entering the large wooden gate which shuts in the Frank quarter, for protection against any sudden burst of popular fury, and seating himself in a miserable Italian locanda, he will ask himself, Where is the "Cairo of the califs, the superb town, the holy city, the delight of the imagination, greatest among the great, whose splendour and opulence made the Prophet smile?"

Almost immediately upon my arrival I called upon Mr. Gliddon, our vice-consul, and upon Nubar Bey, an Armenian dragoman to the pacha, to whom I had a letter from a gentleman in Alexandria. The purport of my visit to the latter was to procure a presentation to the pacha. He told me that several English officers from India had been waiting several days for that purpose; that he thought the pacha would receive them the next day, and if so he would ask permission to present me. Having arranged this, and not being particularly pleased with the interior, and liking exceedingly the donkeys on which it is the custom there to mount on all occasions for long and for short distances, I selected one that was particularly gay and sprightly, and followed by an Arab boy who

had picked up a few Italian words, I told him to take me anywhere outside the city. He happened to take me out at the same gate by which I had entered, and I rode to Old Cairo.

Old Cairo is situated on the river, about four miles from Boulac. The road is pretty; and some of the points of view, particularly in returning, decidedly beautiful. The aqueduct which conveys water into the citadel at Cairo is a fine substantial piece of workmanship, and an item in the picture. The church and grotto in which, as tradition says, the Virgin Mary took refuge with the infant Saviour, when obliged to fly from the persecution of the tetrarch of Judea, are among the few objects worthy of note in Old Cairo. The grotto, which is guarded with pious care by the Coptic priest, is a small excavation, the natural surface covered with smooth tiles; it is hardly large enough to allow one person to crawl in and sit upright. It is very doubtful whether this place was ever the refuge of the virgin; but the craft or simplicity of the priests sustains the tradition, and a half dozen Coptic women, with their faces covered and their long blue dresses, followed me down into the vault and kneeled before the door of the grotto, with a devotion which showed that they at least believed the tale.

At my locanda this morning I made acquaintance with two English parties, a gentleman, his lady, and nephew, who had been travelling in their own yacht on the Mediterranean, and the party of

English officers to whom I before referred, as returning from India by way of the Red Sea. They told me that they were expecting permission from the pacha to wait upon him that day, and asked me to accompany them. This suited me better than to go alone, as I was not ambitious for a tête-à-tête with his highness, and merely wished to see him as one of the lions of the country. Soon after I received a note from the consul, telling me that his highness would receive me at half past three. This, too, was the hour appointed for the reception of the others, and I saw that his highness was disposed to make a lumping business of it, and get rid of us all at once. I accordingly suggested to Mr. Gliddon that we should all go together; but this did not suit him; he was determined that I should have the benefit of a special audience. I submitted myself to his directions, and in this, as in other things while at Cairo, found the benefit of his attentions and advice.

It is the custom of the pacha upon such occasions to send horses from his own stable, and servants from his own household, to wait upon the stranger. At half past three I left my hotel, mounted upon a noble horse, finely caparisoned, with a dashing red cloth saddle, a bridle ornamented with shells, and all the decorations and equipments of a well-mounted Turkish horseman, and, preceded by the janizary, and escorted by the consul, with no small degree of pomp and circumstance I arrived at the gate of the citadel.

Passing through a large yard, in which are several buildings connected with the different offices of government, we stopped at the door of the palace, and, dismounting, ascended a broad flight of marble steps to a large or central hall, from which doors opened into the different apartments. There were three recesses fitted up with divans, where officers were lounging, smoking, and taking coffee. The door of the divan, or hall of audience, was open, at which a guard was stationed, and in going up to demand permission to enter, we saw the pacha at the farther end of the room, with four or five Turks standing before him.

Not being allowed to enter yet, we walked up and down the great hall, among lounging soldiers and officers of all ranks and grades, Turks, Arabs, and beggars, and went out upon the balcony. The view from this embraces the most interesting objects in the vicinity of Cairo, and there are few prospects in the world which include so many; the land of Goshen, the Nile, the obelisk at Heliopolis, the tombs of the caliifs, the pyramids, and the deserts of eternal sands.

While standing upon the balcony, a janizary came to tell us that the pacha would receive us, or, in other words, that we must come to the pacha. The audience-chamber was a very large room, with a high ceiling—perhaps eighty feet long and thirty high—with arabesque paintings on the wall, and a divan all around. The pacha was sitting near one corner at the extreme end, and had a

long and full view of every one who approached him. I too had the same advantage, and in walking up I remarked him as a man about sixty-five, with a long and very white beard, strong features, of a somewhat vulgar cast, a short nose, red face, and rough skin, with an uncommonly fine dark eye, expressing a world of determination and energy. He wore a large turban and a long silk robe, and was smoking a long pipe with an amber mouthpiece. Altogether, he looked the Turk much better than his nominal master the sultan.

His dragoman, Nubar Bey, was there, and presented me. The pacha took his pipe from his mouth, motioned me to take a seat at his right hand on the divan, and with a courteous manner said I was welcome to Egypt. I told him he would soon have to welcome half the world there; he asked me why; and without meaning to flatter the old Turk, I answered that everybody had a great curiosity to visit that interesting country; that heretofore it had been very difficult to get there, and dangerous to travel in when there; but now the facilities of access were greatly increased, and travelling in Egypt had become so safe under his government, that strangers would soon come with as much confidence as they feel while travelling in Europe; and I had no doubt there would be many Americans among them. He took his pipe from his mouth and bowed. I sipped my coffee with great complacency, perfectly satisfied with the manner in which, for the first time, I had played the

courtier to royalty. Knowing his passion for new things, I went on, and told him that he ought to continue his good works, and introduce on the Nile a steamboat from Alexandria to Cairo. He took the pipe from his mouth again, and in the tone of "Let there be light, and there was light," said he had ordered a couple. I knew he was fibbing, and I afterward heard from those through whom he transacted all his business in Europe, that he had never given any such order. Considering that a steamboat was an appropriate weapon in the hands of an American, I followed up my blow by telling him that I had just seen mentioned in a European paper, a project to run steamboats from New-York to Liverpool in twelve or fourteen days. He asked me the distance ; I told him, and he said nothing and smoked on. He knew America, and particularly from a circumstance which, I afterward found, had done wonders in giving her a name and character in the East, the visit of Commodore Patterson in the ship Delaware. So far I had taken decidedly the lead in the conversation ; but the constant repetition of "Son Altesse" by the dragoman, began to remind me that I was in the presence of royalty, and that it was my duty to speak only when I was spoken to. I waited to give him a chance, and the first question he asked was, as to the rate of speed of the steamboats on our rivers. Remembering an old, crazy, five or six mile an hour boat that I had seen in Alexandria, I was afraid to tell him the whole truth, lest he

should not believe me, and did not venture to go higher than fifteen miles an hour; and even then he looked as Ilderim may be supposed to have looked, when the Knight of the Leopard told him of having crossed over a lake like the Dead Sea without wetting his horse's hoofs. I have no doubt, if he ever thought of me afterward, that it was as the lying American; and just at this moment, the party of English coming in, I rose and took my leave. Gibbon says, "When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefis, a race of princes whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed with the blood of their favourites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, that he never departed from the sultan's presence without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders." It was in somewhat of the same spirit that, in passing, one of the Englishmen whispered to me, "Are you sure of your legs?"

During my interview with the pacha, although my conversation and attention were directed towards him, I could not help remarking particularly his dragoman, Nubar Bey. He was an Armenian, perhaps a year or two over thirty, with an olive complexion, and a countenance like marble. He stood up before us, about half way between the pacha and me, his calm eye finely contrasted with the roving and unsettled glances of the pacha, a perfect picture of indifference, standing like a mere machine to translate words, without seeming to comprehend or take the least inter-

est in their import; and though I had been particularly recommended to him, he did not give me a single glance to intimate that he had ever seen me before, or cared ever to see me again. He was an ambitious man, and was evidently acting, and acted well, a part suited to an Eastern court; the part necessary in his responsible and dangerous position, as the depositary of important secrets of government. He was in high favour with the pacha, and when I left was in a fair way of attaining any honour at which his ambitious spirit might aim. On my return to Alexandria, four months after, he was dead.

The life and character of Mohammed Aly are a study and a problem. Like Bernadotte of Sweden, he has risen from the rank of a common soldier, and now sits firmly and securely on a throne of his own making. He has risen by the usual road to greatness among the Turks—war, bloodshed, and treachery. In early life his bold and daring spirit attracted the attention of beys, pachas, and the sultan himself; and having attained a prominent position in the bloody wars that distracted Egypt under the Mamelukes, boldness, cruelty, intrigue, and treachery placed him on the throne of the califs, and neither then nor since have these usual engines of Turkish government, these usual accompaniments of Turkish greatness, for a moment deserted him. The extermination of the Mamelukes, the former lords of Egypt, as regards the number killed, is perhaps nothing in comparison with the

thousands whose blood cries out from the earth against him; but the manner in which it was effected brands the pacha as the prince of traitors and murderers. Invited to the citadel on a friendly visit, while they were smoking the pipe of peace he was preparing to murder them; and no sooner had they left his presence than they were pent up, fired upon, cut down and killed, bravely but hopelessly defending themselves to the last. This cruel deed must not be likened to the slaughter of the janizaries by the sultan, to which it is often compared, for the janizaries were a powerful body, insulting and defying the throne. The sultan staked his head upon the issue, and it was not till he had been driven to the desperate expedient of unfurling the sacred standard of the Prophet, and calling upon all good Mussulmans to rally round it —in a word, it was not till the dead bodies of thirty thousand janizaries were floating down the Bosphorus, that he became master in his own dominions. Not so with the pacha; the Mamelukes were reduced to a feeble band of four or five hundred men, and could effect nothing of importance against the pacha. His cruelty and treachery can neither be forgotten nor forgiven; and when, in passing out of the citadel, the stranger is shown the place where the unhappy Mamelukes were penned up and slaughtered like beasts, one only leaping his gallant horse over the walls of the citadel, he feels that he has left the presence of a wholesale murderer. Since that time he has had

Egypt quietly to himself; has attacked and destroyed the Wahabees on the Red Sea, and subdued the countries above the Cataracts of the Nile, to Sennaar and Dongola. He has been constantly aiming at introducing European improvements; has raised and disciplined an army according to European tactics; increased the revenues, particularly by introducing the culture of cotton, and has made Egypt, from the Mediterranean to the Cataracts, as safe for the traveller as the streets of New-York. It remains to be seen whether, after all, he has not done more harm than good, and whether the miserable and oppressed condition of his subjects does not more than counterbalance all the good that he has done for Egypt. One of the strongest evidences he ever gave of his civilizing inclinations, is the tendency he once manifested to fall under petticoat government. He was passionately fond of his first wife, the sharer of his poverty and meridian greatness, and the mother of his two favourite children, Youssouff and Ibrahim Pacha; and whenever a request was preferred in her name, the enamoured despot would swear his favourite oath, "By my two eyes, if she wishes it, it shall be done." Fond of war, and having an eye to the islands of Candia and Cyprus, he sent a large fleet and army, commanded by his son Ibrahim Pacha, to aid the sultan in his war against Greece, and with his wild Egyptians turned the tide against that unhappy country, receiving as his reward the islands which he coveted. More re-

cently, availing himself of a trifling dispute with the governor of Acre, he turned his arms against the sultan, invaded Syria, and, after a long siege, took and made himself master of Acre; his victorious armies under his son Ibrahim swept all Syria; Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo fell into his hands; and beating the sultan's forces whenever he met them, in mid winter he led his Egyptians over Mount Taurus, defeated the grand vizier with more than one hundred thousand men almost under the walls of Constantinople, and would have driven the sultan from the throne of his ancestors, if the Russians, the old enemies of the Porte, had not come in to his relief. According to the policy of the Porte, that which is wrested from her and she cannot get back, she confirms in the possession of the rebel; and Palestine and Syria are now in the hands of Mohammed Aly, as the fruits of drawing his sword against his master. He still continues to pay tribute to the sultan, constrained doubtless to make the last payment by the crippled state in which he was left by the terrible plague of 1834; and, without any enemy to fear, is at this moment draining the resources of his country to sustain a large army and navy. No one can fathom his intentions—and probably he does not know them himself, but will be governed, as the Turks always are, by caprice and circumstances.

On leaving the pacha, Mr. Gliddon proposed that we should call upon the governor of Cairo. We stopped at what would be called in France the

"Palais de Justice," and, mounting a dozen steps, entered a large hall, at one end of which stood the governor. He was a short stout man, of about fifty-five, with a long beard, handsomely dressed, and stood gently rubbing his hands, and constantly working his jaws like an ox chewing the cud. A crowd was gathered around him, and just as we were approaching the crowd fell back, and we saw an Arab lying on his face on the floor, with two men standing over him, one on each side, with whips, like cowskins, carrying into effect the judgment of the munching governor. The blows fell quickly and heavily, the poor fellow screamed piteously, and when the full number had been given he could not move; he was picked up by his friends and carried out of doors. It was precisely such a scene as realized the reference in the Scriptures to the manners of the East in the time of our Saviour, when a complaint was made to the judge, and the judge handed the offender over to justice; or the graphic accounts in the Arabian Nights, of summary justice administered by the cadi or other expounder of the law, without the intervention of lawyers or jury. The poor Arab was hardly removed before another complaint was entered; but not feeling particularly amiable towards the governor, and having seen enough of the great Turks for that day, I left the citadel and rode to my hotel.

CHAPTER III.

The Slave-market at Cairo.—Tomb of the Pacha.—The Pyramid of Cheops.—Oppressive Attentions of the Arabs.—The Sphinx.

Nearly all the time I was at Cairo, Paul and myself were ill, and for a few days we were in a rather pitiable condition. Fortunately, a young English army surgeon was there, on his way to India, and hearing there was a sick traveller in the house, he with great kindness called upon me and prescribed for our ailments. If this book should ever meet the eye of Dr. Forbes, he will excuse my putting his name in print, as it is the only means I have of acknowledging his kindness in saving me from what would otherwise have been a severe and most inconvenient illness. At that time there was no English physician in Cairo, and I believe none at all, except some vile, half-bred Italian or French apothecaries, who held themselves fully qualified to practise, and were certainly very successful in relieving the sick from all their sufferings. On my return I found Dr. Walne, and though for his own sake I could wish him a better lot, I hope, for the benefit of sick travellers, that he is there still.

One of my first rambles in Cairo was to the

slave-market. It is situated nearly in the centre of the city, as it appeared to me, although, after turning half a dozen corners in the narrow streets of a Turkish city, I will defy a man to tell where he is exactly. It is a large old building, enclosing a hollow square, with chambers all around, both above and below. There were probably five or six hundred slaves sitting on mats in groups of ten, twenty, or thirty, each belonging to a different proprietor. Most of them were entirely naked, though some, whose shivering forms evinced that even there they felt the want of their native burning sun, were covered with blankets. They were mostly from Dongola and Sennaar; but some were Abyssinians, with yellow complexions, fine eyes and teeth, and decidedly handsome. The Nubians were very dark, but with oval, regularly-formed, and handsome faces, mild and amiable expressions, and no mark of the African except the colour of their skin. The worst spectacle in the bazar was that of several lots of sick, who were separated from the rest and arranged on mats by themselves; their bodies thin and shrunken, their chins resting upon their knees, their long lank arms hanging helplessly by their sides, their faces haggard, their eyes fixed with a painful vacancy, and altogether presenting the image of man in his most abject condition. Meeting them on their native sands, their crouching attitudes, shrunken jaws, and rolling eyes, might have led one to mistake them for those hideous animals the orang-

outang and ape. Prices vary from twenty to a hundred dollars; but the sick, as carrying within them the seeds of probable death, are coolly offered for almost nothing, as so much damaged merchandise which the seller is anxious to dispose of before it becomes utterly worthless on his hands. There was one, an Abyssinian, who had mind as well as beauty in her face; she was dressed in silk, and wore ornaments of gold and shells, and called me as I passed, and peeped from behind a curtain, smiling and coquetting, and wept and pouted when I went away; and she thrust out her tongue, to show me that she was not like those I had just been looking at, but that her young blood ran pure and healthy in her veins.

Cairo is surrounded by a wall; the sands of the desert approach it on every side, and every gate, except that of Boulac, opens to a sandy waste. Passing out by the Victory Gate, the contrast between light and darkness is not greater than between the crowded streets and the stillness of the desert, separated from them only by a wall. Immediately without commences the great burial-place of the city. Among thousands and tens of thousands of Mussulmans' headstones, I searched in vain for the tomb of the lamented Burckhardt; there is no mark to distinguish the grave of the enterprising traveller from that of an Arabian camel-driver. At a short distance from the gate are the tombs of the califs, large and beautiful buildings, monuments of the taste and skill of the Saracens.

From hence, passing around outside the walls, I entered by the gate of the citadel, where I saw what goes by the name of Joseph's Well, perhaps better known as the Well of Saladin. It is forty-five feet wide at the mouth, and cut two hundred and seventy feet deep through the solid rock to a spring of saltish water, on a level with the Nile, whence the water is raised in buckets on a wheel, turned by a buffalo.

On the 25th, with a voice that belied my feelings, I wished Paul a merry Christmas; and, after breakfast, wishing to celebrate the day, mounted a donkey and rode to the site of the ancient Heliopolis, near the village of Matarea, about four miles from Cairo, on the borders of the rich land of Goshen. The geographer Strabo visited these ruins thirty years A. C., and describes them almost exactly as we see them now. A great temple of the sun once stood here. Herodotus and Plato studied philosophy in the schools of Heliopolis; "a barbarous Persian overturned her temples; a fanatic Arabian burnt her books;" and a single obelisk, standing sixty-seven feet high, in a field ploughed and cultivated to its very base, stands, a melancholy monument of former greatness and eternal ruin.

Passing out by another gate is another vast cemetery, ranges of tombs extending miles out into the desert. In Turkey I had admired the beauty of the graveyards, and often thought how calmly slept the dead under the thick shade of the mourn-

ing cypress. In Egypt I admired still more the solemn stillness and grandeur of a last resting-place among the eternal sands of the desert. In this great city of the dead stand the tombs of the Mamelukes, originally slaves from the foot of the Caucasus, then the lords and tyrants of Egypt, and now an exterminated race: the tombs are large, handsome buildings, with domes and minarets, the interior of the domes beautifully wrought, and windows of stained glass, all going to ruins. Here, too, is the tomb of the pacha. Fallen, changed, completely revolutionized as Egypt is, even to this day peculiar regard is paid to the structure of tombs, and the burial-places of the dead. The tomb of the pacha is called the greatest structure of modern Egypt. It is a large stone building, with several domes, strongly but coarsely made. The interior, still, solemn, and imposing, is divided into two chambers; in the first, in a conspicuous situation, is the body of his favourite wife, and around are those of other members of his family; in the other chamber are several tombs, covered with large and valuable cashmere shawls; several places yet unoccupied, and in one corner a large vacant place, reserved for the pacha himself. Both apartments are carpeted, and illuminated with lamps, with divans in the recesses, and little wicker chairs for the different members of the family who come to mourn and pray. Two ladies were there, sitting near one of the tombs, their faces completely covered; and, that I might not disturb their pious

devotions, my guide led me in a different direction.

During the time that I had passed in lounging about Cairo, I had repeatedly been down to Boulac in search of a boat for my intended voyage up the Nile; and going one Sunday to dine on the Island of Rhoda with Mr. Trail, a young Englishman who had charge of the palace and garden of Ibrahim Pacha, I again rode along the bank of the river for the same purpose. In coming up from Alexandria I had found the inconveniences of a large boat, and was looking for one of the smallest dimensions that could be at all comfortable. We were crossing over one more than half sunk in the water, which I remarked to Paul was about the right size; and while we stopped a moment, without the least idea that it could be made fit for use, an Arab came up and whispered to Paul that he could pump out the water in two hours, and had only sunk the boat to save it from the officers of the pacha, who would otherwise take it for the use of government. Upon this information, I struck a bargain for the boat, eight men, a rais, and a pilot. The officers of the pacha were on the bank looking out for boats, and, notwithstanding my Arab's ingenious contrivance, just when I had closed my agreement, they came on board and claimed possession. I refused to give up my right, and sent to the agent of the consul for an American flag. He could not give me an American, but sent me an English flag, and I did not hesitate to

put myself under its protection. I hoisted it with my own hands, but the rascally Turks paid no regard to its broad folds. The majesty of England did not suffer, however, in my hands, and Paul and I spent more than an hour in running from one officer to another, before we could procure the necessary order for the release of the boat. Leaving this with the rais, and the flag still flying, I went on to Rhoda, and spent the day there in decidedly the prettiest spot about Cairo. At the head of this island is the celebrated Nilometer, which, for no one knows how long, has marked the annual rise and fall of the Nile.

I had been ten days in Cairo without going to the pyramids. I had seen them almost every day, but my doctor, who was to accompany me, had delayed my visit. He was obliged to leave Cairo, however, before I was ready to do the same; and as soon as he was off, like a schoolboy when the master is out of sight, I took advantage of his absence. My old friend from Alexandria had promised to go with me to the pyramids, and joining me at Old Cairo, we crossed over to Ghizeh. Almost from the gates of Cairo, the pyramids are constantly in sight, and after crossing the ferry, we at first rode directly towards them; but the waters were yet so high that we were obliged to diverge from the straight road. In about an hour we separated, my guide taking one route, and my friend's another. With my eyes constantly fixed on the pyramids, I was not aware of our separation until I

had gone too far to return, and my guide proved to be right. Standing alone on an elevated mountainous range on the edge of the desert, without any object with which to compare them, the immense size of the pyramids did not strike me with full force. Arrived at the banks of a stream, twenty Arabs, more than half naked, and most of them blind of an eye, came running towards me, dashed through the stream, and pulling, hauling, and scuffling at each other, all laid hold of me to carry me over. All seemed bent upon having something to do with me, even if they carried me over piecemeal; but I selected two of the strongest, with little more than one eye between them, and keeping the rest off as well as I could, was borne over dryshod. Approaching, the three great pyramids and one small one are in view, towering higher and higher above the plain. I thought I was just upon them, and that I could almost touch them; yet I was more than a mile distant; the nearer I approached, the more their gigantic dimensions grew upon me, until, when I actually reached them, rode up to the first layer of stones, and saw how very small I was, and looked up their sloping sides to the lofty summits, they seemed to have grown to the size of mountains.

The base of the great pyramid is about eight hundred feet square, covering a surface of about eleven acres, according to the best measurement, and four hundred and sixty-one feet high; or, to give a clearer idea, starting from a base as large

as Washington Parade Ground, it rises to a tapering point, nearly three times as high as Trinity Church steeple. Even as I walked around it, and looked up at it from the base, I did not feel its immensity until I commenced ascending; then, having climbed some distance up, when I stopped to breathe and looked down upon my friend below, who was dwindled to insect size, and then up at the great distance between me and the summit, then I realized in all their force the huge dimensions of this giant work. It took me twenty minutes to mount to the summit; about the same time that it had required to mount the cones of Etna and Vesuvius. The ascent is not particularly difficult, at least with the assistance of the Arabs. There are two hundred and six tiers of stone, from one to four feet in height, each two or three feet smaller than the one below, making what are called the steps. Very often the steps were so high that I could not reach them with my feet. Indeed, for the most part, I was obliged to climb with my knees, deriving great assistance from the step which one Arab made for me with his knee, and the helping hand of another above.

It is not what it once was to go to the pyramids. They have become regular lions for the multitudes of travellers; but still, common as the journey has become, no man can stand on the top of the great pyramid of Cheops, and look out upon the dark mountains of Mokattam bordering the Arabian desert, upon the ancient city of the Pharaohs, its

domes, its mosques and minarets, glittering in the light of a vertical sun—upon the rich valley of the Nile, and the "river of Egypt" rolling at his feet—the long range of pyramids and tombs extending along the edge of the desert to the ruined city of Memphis, and the boundless and eternal sands of Africa, without considering that moment an epoch not to be forgotten. Thousands of years roll through his mind, and thought recalls the men who built them, their mysterious uses, the poets, historians, philosophers, and warriors who have gazed upon them with wonder like his own.

For one who but yesterday was bustling in the streets of a busy city, it was a thing of strange and indescribable interest to be standing on the top of the great pyramid, surrounded by a dozen half-naked Arabs, forgetting, as completely as if they had never been, the stirring scenes of his distant home. But even here petty vexations followed me, and half the interest of the time and scene was destroyed by the clamour of my guides. The descent I found extremely easy; many persons complain of the dizziness caused by looking down from such a height, but I did not find myself so affected; and though the donkeys at the base looked like flies, I could almost have danced down the mighty sides.

The great pyramid is supposed to contain six millions of cubic feet of stone, and a hundred thousand men are said to have been employed twenty years in building it. The four angles stand exactly in the four points of the compass, inducing

the belief that it was intended for other purposes than those of a sepulchre. The entrance is on the north side. The sands of the desert have encroached upon it, and, with the fallen stones and rubbish, have buried it to the sixteenth step. Climbing over this rubbish the entrance is reached—a narrow passage three and a half feet square, lined with broad blocks of polished granite, descending in the interior at an angle of twenty-seven degrees for about ninety-two feet; then the passage turns to the right, and winds upward to a steep ascent of eight or nine feet, and then falls into the natural passage, which is five feet high and one hundred feet long, forming a continued ascent to a sort of landing-place; in a small recess of this is the orifice or shaft called the well; moving onward through a long passage, the explorer comes to what is called the Queen's Chambers, seventeen feet long, fourteen wide, and twelve high. I entered a hole, opening from this crypt, and crawling on my hands and knees, came to a larger opening, not a regular chamber, and now cumbered with fallen stones. Immediately above this, ascending by an inclined plane lined with highly polished granite, and about one hundred and twenty feet in length, and mounting a short space by means of holes cut in the sides, I entered the King's Chamber, about thirty-seven feet long, seventeen feet wide, and twenty feet high. The walls of the chamber are of red granite, highly polished, each stone reaching from the floor to the ceiling; and the ceiling is formed of nine

large slabs of polished granite, extending from wall to wall. It is not the least interesting part of a visit to the interior of the pyramids, as you are groping your way after your Arab guide, to feel your hand running along the sides of an enormous shaft, smooth and polished as the finest marble, and to see by the light of the flaring torch chambers of red granite from the Cataracts of the Nile, the immense blocks standing around and above you, smooth and beautifully polished in places, where, if our notions of the pyramids be true, they were intended but for few mortal eyes. At one end of the chamber stands a sarcophagus, also of red granite; its length is seven feet six inches, depth three and a half, breadth three feet three inches. Here is supposed to have slept one of the great rulers of the earth, the king of the then greatest kingdom of the world, the proud mortal for whom this mighty structure was raised. Where is he now? Even his dry bones are gone, torn away by rude hands, and scattered by the winds of heaven.

There is something curious about this sarcophagus too. It is exactly the size of the orifice which forms the entrance of the pyramid, and could not have been conveyed to its place by any of the now known passages; consequently must have been deposited during the building, or before the passage was finished in its present state. The interior of the pyramid is excessively hot, particularly when surrounded by a number of Arabs and

flaring torches. Leaving the King's Chamber, I descended the inclined plane, and prepared to descend the well referred to by Pliny. The shaft is small; merely large enough to permit one to descend with the legs astride, the feet resting in little niches, and hands clinging to the same. Having no janizary with me to keep them off, I was very much annoyed by the Arabs following me. I had at first selected two as my guides, and told the others to go away; but it was of no use. They had nothing else to do; a few paras would satisfy them for their day's labour; and the chance of getting these, either from charity or by importunity, made them all follow. At the mouth of the well I again selected my two guides, and again told the others not to follow; and, sending the two before me, followed down the well—being myself quickly followed by two others. I shouted to them to go back, but they paid no regard to me; so, coming out again, I could not help giving the fellow next me a blow with a club, which sent him skipping among his companions. I then flourished my stick among them, and after a deal of expostulation and threatening gesticulation, I attempted the descent once more. A second time they followed me, and I came out perfectly furious. My friend was outside shooting, the pyramids being nothing new to him, and unfortunately I had been obliged to leave Paul at Cairo, and had no one with me but a little Nubian boy. Him I could not prevail upon to descend the well; he was frightened, and

begged me not to go down; and when he saw them follow the second time, and me come out and lay about me with a club, he began to cry, and, before I could lay hold of him, ran away. I could do nothing without him, and was obliged to follow. There was no use in battling with the poor fellows, for they made no resistance; and I believe I might have brained the whole of them without one offering to strike a blow. Moreover, it was very hot and smothering; and as there was nothing particular to see, nor any discovery to make, I concluded to give it up; and calling my guides to return, in a few moments escaped from the hot and confined air of the pyramid.

At the base I found my friend sitting quietly with his gun in his hand, and brought upon him the hornet's nest which had so worried me within. The Arabs, considering their work done, gathered around me, clamorous for bucksheesh, and none was more importunate than the fellows who had followed me so pertinaciously. I gave them liberally, but this only whetted their appetites. There was no getting rid of them; a sweep of my club would send them away for a moment, but instantly they would reorganize and come on again, putting the women and children in the front rank. The sheik came ostensibly to our relief; but I had doubts whether he did not rather urge them on. He, however, protected us to a certain extent, while we went into one of the many tombs to eat our luncheon. For a great distance around,

there are large tombs which would of themselves attract the attention of the traveller, were they not lost in the overwhelming interest of the pyramids. That in which we lunched had a deep shaft in the centre, leading to the pit where the mummies had been piled one upon another. The Arabs had opened and rifled the graves, and bones and fragments were still lying scattered around. Our persecutors were sitting at the door of the tomb looking in upon us, and devouring with their eyes every morsel that we put into our mouths. We did not linger long over our meal; and giving them the fragments, set off for a walk around the pyramid of Cephrenes, the second in grandeur.

This pyramid was opened at great labour and expense by the indefatigable Belzoni, and a chamber discovered containing a sarcophagus, as in that of Cheops. The passage, however, has now become choked up, and hardly accessible. Though not so high, it is much more difficult to mount than the other, the outside being covered with a coat of hard and polished cement, at the top almost perfectly smooth and unbroken. Two English officers had mounted it a few days before, who told me they had found the ascent both difficult and dangerous. One of the Arabs who accompanied them, after he had reached the top, became frightened, and, not daring to descend, remained hanging on there more than an hour, till his old father climbed up and inspired him with confidence to come down.

The pyramids, like all the other works of the ancient Egyptians, are built with great regard to accuracy of proportion. The sepulchral chamber is not in the centre, but in an irregular and out-of-the-way position in the vast pile; and some idea may be formed of the great ignorance which must exist in regard to the whole structure and its uses, from the fact that by computation, allowing an equal solid bulk for partition walls, there is sufficient space in the great pyramid for 3700 chambers as large as that containing the sarcophagus.

Next to the pyramids, probably as old, and hardly inferior in interest, is the celebrated Sphinx. Notwithstanding the great labours of Cavaglia, it is now so covered with sand that it is difficult to realize the bulk of this gigantic monument. Its head, neck, shoulders, and breast are still uncovered; its face, though worn and broken, is mild, amiable, and intelligent, seeming, among the tombs around it, like a divinity guarding the dead.

CHAPTER IV.

Journey up the Nile.—An Arab Burial.—Pilgrims to Mecca.—Trials of Patience.—A Hurricane on the Nile.—A Turkish Bath.

On the first of January I commenced my journey up the Nile. My boat was small, for greater convenience in rowing and towing. She was, however, about forty feet long, with two fine latteen sails, and manned by eight men, a rais or captain, and a governor or pilot. This was to be my home from Cairo to the cataracts, or as long as I remained on the river. There was not a place where a traveller could sleep, and I could not expect to eat a meal or pass a night except on board; consequently, I was obliged to provide myself at Cairo with all things necessary for the whole voyage. My outfit was not very extravagant. It consisted, as near as I can recollect, of two tin cups, two pairs of knives and forks, four plates, coffee, tea, sugar, rice, maccaroni, and a few dozen of claret. My bedroom-furniture consisted of a mattress and coverlet, which in the daytime were tucked up so as to make a divan. Over the head of my bed were my gun and pistols, and at the foot was a little swinging shelf, containing my Library—which consisted of the Modern Traveller

in Egypt, Volney's Travels, and an Italian grammar and dictionary. My only companion was my servant; and as he is about to be somewhat intimate with me, I take the liberty of introducing him to the reader. Paollo Nuozzo, or, more familiarly, Paul, was a Maltese. I had met him at Constantinople travelling with two of my countrymen; and though they did not seem to like him much, I was very well pleased with him, and thought myself quite fortunate, on my arrival at Malta, to find him disengaged. He was a man about thirty-five years old; stout, square built, intelligent; a passionate admirer of ruins, particularly the ruins of the Nile; honest and faithful as the sun, and one of the greatest cowards that luminary ever shone upon. He called himself my dragoman, and, I emember, wrote himself such in the convent at Mount Sinai and the temple at Petra, though he promised to make himself generally useful, and was my only servant during my whole tour. He spoke French, Italian, Maltese, Greek, Turkish, and Arabic, but could not read any one of these languages. He had lived several years in Cairo, and had travelled on the Nile before, and understood all the little arrangements necessary for the voyage.

At about twelve o'clock, then, the hour when at home my friends were commencing their New-year visits, accompanied to the boat by my friend from Alexandria, my first, last, and best friend in Egypt, I embarked; and with a fair wind, and

"the star-spangled banner" (made by an Arab tailor) floating above me, I commenced my journey on the Nile. It is necessary here for every stranger to place himself under the flag of his country, else his boat and men are liable to be taken at any moment by the officers of the pacha. It was the first time I had myself ever raised the banner of my country, and I felt a peculiar pride in the consciousness that it could protect me so far from home.

We started, as when I first embarked upon the Nile, with a fair wind, at sunset, and again to the gentle tap of the Arab drum we passed the great pyramids of Ghizeh, and the giant monuments of Schara and Dashoor. Long after sunset their dark outline was distinctly visible over the desert; I sat on the deck of my boat till their vast masses became lost in the darkness. My situation was novel and exciting, and my spirits were elate with curious expectation; but with the morrow came a very essential change. A feeling of gloom came over me when I found the wind against my progress; but the current was still running obstinately the same way as before, and to be so soon deserted by the element that I needed, gave a rather dreary aspect to the long journey before me. That day, however, we contrived to do something; my boat being small, my men were almost continually ashore, with ropes around their breasts, towing; and occasionally, rowing across from side to side would give us the advantage of a bend in the

river, when we could carry sail and make some progress. The scenery of the Nile, about fifty miles from Cairo, differed somewhat from the rich valley of the Delta, the dark mountains of Mokattam in the neighbourhood of Cairo bounding the valley on the Arabian side, while on the African the desert approached to the very banks of the river. Though travelling in a country in which, by poetic license, and by way of winding off a period, every foot of ground is said to possess an exciting interest, during my first day's journey on the Nile I was thrown very much upon my own resources.

My gun was the first thing that presented itself. I had bought it in Cairo, double-barrelled and new, for fifteen dollars. I did not expect to make much use of it, and it was so very cheap that I was rather doubtful of its safety, and intended to make trial of it with a double charge and a slow match. But Paul had anticipated me; he had already put in two enormous charges, and sent one of the boatmen ashore to try it. I remonstrated with him upon the risk to which he had exposed the man; but he answered in the tone in which he (like all European servants) always spoke of the degraded inhabitants of Egypt, "Poh, he is only an Arab;" and I was soon relieved from apprehension by the Arab returning, full of praises of the gun, having killed with both shots. One thing disheartened me even more than the head wind. Ever since I left home I had been in earnest search of a warm

climate, and thought I had secured it in Egypt; but wherever I went, I seemed to carry with me an influence that chilled the atmosphere. In the morning, before I rose, Paul brought in to me a piece of ice as thick as a pane of glass, made during the night—a most extraordinary, and to me unexpected circumstance. The poor Arabs, accustomed to their hot and burning sun, shrank in the cold almost to nothing, and early in the morning and in the evening were utterly unfit for labour. I suffered very much also myself, obliged to sit with the door of my cabin closed, my coat and greatcoat on, and with a prospect of a long cold voyage. By the evening of the second day I had lost some portion of the enthusiasm with which, under a well-filled sail, I had started the day before from Cairo.

January 3. The third day was again exceedingly cold, the wind still ahead, and stronger than yesterday. I was still in bed, looking through the many openings of my cabin, and the men were on shore towing, when I was roused by a loud voice of lamentation, in which the weeping and wailing of women predominated. I stepped out, and saw on the bank of the river the dead body of an Arab, surrounded by men, women, and children, weeping and howling over it previous to burial. The body was covered with a wrapper of coarse linen cloth, drawn tight over the head and tied under the neck, and fastened between two parallel bars, intended as a barrow to carry it to its grave. It

lay a little apart before the group of mourners, who sat on the bank above it, with their eyes turned towards it, weeping, and apparently talking to it. The women were the most conspicuous among the mourners. The dead man had been more happy in his connexions than I imagine the Arabs generally are, if all the women sitting there were really mourning his death. Whether they were real mourners, or whether they were merely going through the formal part of an Egyptian funeral ceremony, I cannot say; but the big tears rolled down their cheeks, and their cries sounded like the overflowings of distressed hearts. A death and burial scene is at any time solemn, and I do not know that it loses any of its solemnity even when the scene is on the banks of the Nile, and the subject a poor and oppressed Arab. Human affection probably glows as warmly here as under a gilded roof, and I am disposed to be charitable to the exhibition that I now beheld; but I could not help noticing that the cries became louder as I approached, and I had hardly seated myself at a little distance from the corpse, before the women seemed to be completely carried away by their grief, and with loud cries, tearing their hair and beating their breasts, threw out their arms towards the corpse, and prayed, and wept, and then turned away with shrieks piteous enough to touch the heart of the dead.

The general territorial division of Egypt, from time immemorial, has been into upper and lower;

the latter beginning at the shores of the Mediterranean, and extending very nearly to the ancient Memphis, and the former commencing at Memphis and extending to the cataracts. Passing by, for the present, the ruins of Memphis, on the fourth day, the wind dead ahead, and the men towing at a very slow rate, I went ashore with my gun, and at about eleven o'clock in the morning walked into the town of Beni Souef. This town stands on the Libyan side of the river, on the borders of a rich valley, the Nile running close under the foot of the Arabian mountains; and contains, as its most prominent objects, a mosque and minaret, and what is here called a palace or seraglio; that is, a large coarse building covered with white cement, and having grated windows for the harem.

Here travellers sometimes leave their boats to make an excursion to Medineh el Fayoun, the ancient Crocodopolis, or Arsinoë, near the great Lake Mœris. This lake was in ancient days one of the wonders of Egypt. It was sixty miles long (about the size of the Lake of Geneva), and Herodotus says that it was an artificial lake, and that in his time the towering summits of two pyramids were visible above its surface. The great labyrinth, too, was supposed to be somewhere near this; but no pyramids, nor any ruins of the labyrinth, are now to be seen. The lake is comparatively dry, and very little is left to reward the traveller.

At sundown we hauled up to the bank, alongside a boat loaded with pilgrims; and building a

fire on shore, the two crews, with their motley passengers, spent the night quietly around it. It was the first time since we left Cairo that we had come in contact with pilgrims, although we had been seeing them from my first entering Egypt. This was the season for the pilgrimage to Mecca. The great caravan was already gathering at Cairo, while numbers, not wishing to wait, were seen on all parts of the Nile on their way to Kenneh, from thence to cross the desert to Cosseir, and down the Red Sea to the Holy City. They were coming from all parts of the Mussulman dominions, poor and rich, old and young, women and children, almost piled upon each other by scores, for several months exposing themselves to all manner of hardships, in obedience to one of the principal injunctions of the Koran, once in their lives to perform a pilgrimage to Mecca.

January 5. The wind was still dead ahead; the men continued to tow, but without making much progress; and the day dragged heavily. On the sixth I saw another burial. Early in the morning Paul called me to look out. We were lying in company with another boat, fast to a little island of sand nearly in the middle of the river. I got up exceedingly cold, and saw a dead man lying on the sand, his limbs drawn up and stiff. He was a boatman on board the other boat, and had died during the night. A group of Arabs was sitting near, making coffee, while two were preparing to wash the body previous to burial. They brought

it down to the margin of the river and laid it carefully upon the sand, then washed it, pressed down the drawn-up legs, and wrapped it in fragments of tattered garments, contributed by his fellow-boatmen, who could ill spare even these scanty rags; and laying it with great decency a little way from the river, joined the other group, and sat down with great gravity to pipes and coffee. In a few moments two of them rose, and going a little apart, with their bare hands scratched a shallow grave, and the poor Arab was left on a little sand-bank in the Nile, to be covered in another season by the mighty river. He was an entire stranger, having come on board the evening before his boat set out from Cairo. In all probability, he was one of an immense mass which swarms in the crowded streets of Cairo, without friends, occupation, or settled means of living.

On the seventh the wind was still ahead and blowing strong, and the air was very cold. Having no books, no society, and no occupation except talking with Paul and my boatmen, and the stragglers on shore, I became dispirited, and sat, hour after hour, wrapped up in my greatcoat, deliberating whether I should not turn back. One of the most vexatious things was the satisfaction apparently enjoyed by all around me. If we hauled up alongside another boat, we were sure to find the crew sprawling about in a most perfect state of contentment, and seemingly grateful to the adverse wind that prevented their moving. My

own men were very obedient, but they could not control the wind. I had a written contract with my rais, drawn up by a Copt in Cairo, in pretty Arabic characters, and signed by both of us, although neither knew a word of its contents. The captain's manner of signing, I remember, was very primitive; he dipped the end of his finger in the ink, and pressed it on the paper, and in so doing seemed to consider that he had sold himself to me almost body and soul. "I know I am obliged to go if Wowega says so," was his invariable answer; but though perfectly ready to go whenever there was a chance, it was easy enough to see that they were all quite as contented when there was none. Several times I was on the point of turning back, the wind drew down the river so invitingly; but if I returned it was too early to go into Syria, and Thebes, "Thebes with her hundred gates," beckoned me on. On the seventh I had not made much more than fifty miles, and the wind was still ahead, and blowing stronger than ever; indeed, it seemed as if this morning, for the first time, it had really commenced in earnest. I became desperate, and went ashore, resolved to wear it out. We were lying along the bank, on the Libyan side, in company with fifteen or twenty boats wind-bound like ourselves. It was near a little mud village, of which I forget the name, and several Bedouin tents were on the bank, in one of which I was sitting smoking a pipe. The wind was blowing down with a fury I have never seen surpassed in a

gale at sea, bringing with it the light sands of the desert, and at times covering the river with a thick cloud which prevented my seeing across it. A clearing up for a moment showed a boat of the largest class, heavily laden, and coming down with astonishing velocity; it was like the flight of an enormous bird. She was under bare poles, but small portions of the sail had got loose, and the Arabs were out on the very ends of the long spars getting them in. One of the boatmen, with a rope under his arm, had plunged into the river, and with strong swimming reached the bank, where a hundred men ran to his assistance. Their united strength turned her bows around, up stream, but nothing could stop her; stern foremost, she dragged the whole posse of Arabs to the bank, and broke away from them perfectly ungovernable; whirling around, her bows pitched into our fleet with a loud crash, tore away several of the boats, and carrying one off, fast locked as in a death-grasp, she resumed her headlong course down the river. They had gone but a few rods, when the stranger pitched her bows under and went down in a moment, bearing her helpless companion also to the bottom. It was the most exciting incident I had seen upon the river. The violence of the wind, the swift movement of the boat, the crash, the wild figures of the Arabs on shore and on board, one in a red dress almost on the top of the long spar, his turban loose and streaming in the wind, all formed a novel and most animating scene. I need scarcely

say that no lives were lost, for an Arab, on the bosom of his beloved river, is as safe as in his mud cabin.

On the eighth the wind was as contrary as ever; but between rowing and towing we had managed to crawl up as far as Minyeh. It was the season of the Ramadan, when for thirty days, from the rising to the setting of the sun, the followers of the Prophet are forbidden to eat, drink, or even smoke, or take the bath. My first inquiry was for a bath. It would not be heated or lighted up till eight o'clock; at eight o'clock I went, and was surprised to find it so large and comfortable. I was not long surprised, however, for I found that no sooner was the sacred prohibition removed, than the Turks and Arabs began to pour in in throngs; they came without any respect of persons, the haughty Turk with his pipe-bearing slave and the poor Arab boatmen; in short, every one who could raise a few paras.

It was certainly not a very select company, nor over clean, and probably very few Europeans would have stood the thing as I did. My boatmen were all there. They were my servants, said the rais, and were bound to follow me everywhere. As I was a Frank, and as such expected to pay ten times as much as any one else, I had the best place in the bath, at the head of the great reservoir of hot water. My white skin made me a marked object among the swarthy figures lying around me; and half a dozen of the operatives, lank, bony

fellows, and perfectly naked, came up and claimed me. They settled it among themselves, however, and gave the preference to a dried-up old man, more than sixty, a perfect living skeleton, who had been more than forty years a scrubber in the bath. He took me through the first process of rubbing with the glove and brush; and having thrown over me a copious ablution of warm water, left me to recover at leisure. I lay on the marble that formed the border of the reservoir, only two or three inches above the surface of the water, into which I put my hand and found it excessively hot; but the old man, satisfied with his exertion in rubbing me, sat on the edge of the reservoir, with his feet and legs hanging in the water, with every appearance of satisfaction. Presently he slid off into the water, and sinking up to his chin, remained so a moment, drew a long breath, and seemed to look around him with a feeling of comfort. I had hardly raised myself on my elbow to look at this phenomenon, before a fine brawny fellow, who had been lying for some time torpid by my side, rose slowly, slid off like a turtle, and continued sinking until he too had immersed himself up to his chin. I expressed to him my astonishment at his ability to endure such heat, but he told me that he was a boatman, had been ten days coming up from Cairo, and was almost frozen, and his only regret was that the water was not much hotter. He had hardly answered me before another and another followed, till all the dark naked figures around me

had vanished. By the fitful glimmering of the little lamps, all that I could see was a parcel of shaved heads on the surface of the water, at rest or turning slowly and quietly as on pivots. Most of them seemed to be enjoying it with an air of quiet, dreamy satisfaction; but the man with whom I had spoken first, seemed to be carried beyond the bounds of Mussulman gravity. It operated upon him like a good dinner; it made him loquacious, and he urged me to come in, nay, he even became frolicksome; and, making a heavy surge, threw a large body of the water over the marble on which I was lying. I almost screamed, and started up as if melted lead had been poured upon me; even while standing up it seemed to blister the soles of my feet, and I was obliged to keep up a dancing movement, changing as fast as I could, to the astonishment of the dozing bathers, and the utter consternation of my would-be friend. Roused too much to relapse into the quiet luxury of perspiration, I went into another apartment, of a cooler temperature, where, after remaining in a bath of moderately warm water, I was wrapped up in hot cloths and towels, and conducted into the great chamber. Here I selected a couch, and throwing myself upon it, gave myself up to the operators, who now took charge of me, and well did they sustain the high reputation of a Turkish bath: my arms were gently laid upon my breast, where the knee of a powerful man pressed upon them; my joints were cracked and pulled—back, arms, the

palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, all visited in succession. I had been shampooed at Smyrna, Constantinople, and Cairo; but who would have thought of being carried to the seventh heaven at the little town of Minyeh? The men who had me in hand were perfect amateurs, enthusiasts, worthy of rubbing the hide of the sultan himself; and the pipe and coffee that followed were worthy too of that same mighty seigneur. The large room was dimly lighted, and turn which way I would, there was a naked body, apparently without a soul, lying torpid, and turned and tumbled at will by a couple of workmen. I had had some fears of the plague; and Paul, though he felt his fears gradually dispelled by the soothing process which he underwent also, to the last continued to keep particularly clear of touching any of them; but I left the bath a different man; all my moral as well as physical strength was roused. I no longer drooped or looked back; and though the wind was still blowing a hurricane in my teeth, I was bent upon Thebes and the Cataracts.

CHAPTER V.

Sporting on the Nile.—A Recluse.—An Egyptian Hebe.—Siout.—A Wolf-race among the Tombs.—Adventure with a Governor.—The Smallest Favours thankfully received.

JANUARY 13. In the morning the first thing I did was to shoot at a flock of ducks, the next to shoot at a crocodile. He was the first I had seen, and was lying on a sand-bank on an island in the middle of the river. I might as well have thrown a stone at him, for he was out of range twice over, and his hard skin would have laughed at my bird-shot, even if I had hit him; but I did what every traveller on the Nile must do, I shot *at* a crocodile. I met several travellers, all abundantly provided with materials, and believe we were about equally successful. I never killed any, nor did they. During the day the wind abated considerably, and towards evening it was almost calm. My boat rowed as easily as a barge, and we were approaching Manfaloot. For some time before reaching it there is a change in the appearance of the river.

The general character of the scenery of the Nile is that of a rich valley, from six to eight or ten miles wide, divided by the river, and protected on either side from the Libyan and Arabian deserts by two continuous and parallel ranges of moun-

tains. These are the strongly-marked and distinguishing features; and from Cairo to the Cataracts, almost the only variety is that occasioned by the greater or less distance of these two ranges. Before approaching Manfaloot they changed their direction, and on the Arabian side the dark mountains of Mokattam advanced to the very border of the river.

Here we began to approach the eternal monuments of Egyptian industry. For a long distance the high range of rocky mountain was lined with tombs, their open doors inviting us to stop and examine them; but most provokingly, now for the first time since the day we started, the wind was fair. It had been my peculiar bad luck to have a continuance of head winds on a part of the river where there was nothing to see; and almost the very moment I came to an object of interest, the wind became favourable, and was sweeping us along beautifully. One of the few pieces of advice given me at Cairo, of which my own observation taught me the wisdom, was, with a fair wind never to stop going up; and though every tomb seemed to reproach me for my neglect, we went resolutely on.

In one of the tombs lives an old man, who has been there more than fifty years, and an old wife, his companion for more than half a century, is there with him. His children live in Upper Egypt, and once a year they come to visit their parents. The old man is still hale and strong; at night a light is

always burning in his tomb, a basket is constantly let down to receive the offerings of the charitable, and few travellers, even among the poor Arabs, ever pass without leaving their mites for the recluse of the sepulchres.

It was dark when we arrived at Manfaloot, but, being the season of the Ramadan, the Mussulman day had just begun; the bazars were open, and the cook and coffee shops thronged with Turks and Arabs, indemnifying themselves for their long abstinence. My boatmen wanted to stop for the night; but as I would not stop for my own pleasure at the tombs below, I of course would not stop here for their's; and after an hour or two spent in lounging through the bazars and making a few necessary purchases, we were again under way. At about eight o'clock, with a beautiful wind, I sailed into the harbour of Siout. This is the largest town on the Nile, and the capital of Upper Egypt. Brighter prospects now opened upon me. The wind that had brought us into Siout, and was ready to carry us on farther, was not the cold and cheerless one that for more than two weeks had blown in my teeth, but mild, balmy, and refreshing, raising the drooping head of the invalid, and making the man in health feel like walking, running, climbing, or clearing fences on horseback. Among the bourriquières who surrounded me the moment I jumped on the bank, was a beautiful bright-eyed little Arab girl, about eight years old, leading a donkey, and flourishing a long stick with a grace

that would have shamed the best pupil of a fashionable dancing-master. By some accident, moreover, her face and hands were clean, and she seemed to be a general favourite among her ragged companions, who fell back with a gallantry and politeness that would have done honour to the ball-room of the dancing-master aforesaid. Leaving her without a competitor, they deprived me of the pleasure of showing my preference; and putting myself under her guidance, I followed her nimble little feet on the road to Siout. I make special mention of this little girl, because it is a rare thing to see an Egyptian child in whom one can take any interest. It was the only time such a thing ever occurred to me; and really she exhibited so much beauty and grace, such a mild, open, and engaging expression, and such propriety of behaviour as she walked by my side, urging on the donkey, and looking up in my face when I asked her a question, that I felt ashamed of myself for riding while she walked. But, tender and delicate as she looked, she would have walked by the side of her donkey, and tired down the strongest man. She was, of course, the child of poor parents, of whom the donkey was the chief support. The father had been in the habit of going out with it himself, and frequently taking the little girl with him as a companion. As she grew up, she went out occasionally alone; and even among the Turks her interesting little figure made her a favourite; and when all the other donkeys were idle, her's

was sure to be engaged. This and many other things I learned from her own pretty little lips, on my way to Siout.

Siout stands about a mile and a half from the river, in one of the richest valleys of the Nile. At the season of inundation, when the river rolls down in all its majesty, the whole intermediate country is overflowed; and boats of the largest size, steering their course over the waste of waters by the projecting tops of the palm-trees, come to anchor under the walls of the city. A high causeway from the river to the city crosses the plain, a comparatively unknown and unnoticed, but stupendous work, which for more than three thousand years has resisted the headlong current of the Nile at its highest, and now stands like the pyramids, not so striking, but an equally enduring, and perhaps more really wonderful monument of Egyptian labour. A short distance before reaching the city, on the right, are the handsome palace and garden of Ibrahim Pacha. A stream winds through the valley, crossed by a stone bridge, and over this is the entrance-gate of the city. The governor's palace, the most imposing and best structure I had seen since the citadel at Cairo, standing first within the walls, seemed like a warder at the door.

The large courtyard before the door of the palace contained a group of idlers, mostly officers of the household, all well armed, and carrying themselves with the usual air of Turkish conceit and

insolence. Sitting on one side, with large turbans and long robes, unarmed, and with the large brass inkhorn by their sides, the badge of their peaceful and inferior, if not degrading profession, was a row of Copts, calling themselves, and believed to be, the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, having, as they say, preserved their blood intact during all the changes of their country. Boasting the blood of the ancient Egyptians, with the ruins of the mighty temples in which they worshipped, and the mighty tombs in which they were buried, staring them in the face, they were sitting on the bare earth at the door of a petty delegate of a foreign master, a race of degraded beggars, lifeless and soulless, content to receive as a grace from the hands of a tyrant, the wretched privilege of living as slaves in the land where their fathers reigned as masters.

I do not believe that the contents of all the bazars in Siout, one of the largest towns in Egypt, were worth as much as the stock of an ordinary dealer in dry goods in Broadway. But these are not the things for which the traveller stops at Siout. On the lofty mountains overlooking this richest valley of the Nile, and protecting it from the Libyan Desert, is a long range of tombs, the burial-place of the ancient Egyptians; and the traveller, looking for a moment at the little Mohammedan burying-ground, turns with wonder from the little city he has left, and asks, Where is the great city which had its graves in the sides of

yonder mountains? Where are the people who despised the earth as a burial-place, and made for themselves tombs in the eternal granite?

The mountain is about as far from the city as the river, and the approach to it is by another strong causeway over the same beautiful plain. Leaving our donkeys at its foot, and following the nimble footsteps of my little Arab girl, we climbed by a steep ascent to the first range of tombs. They were the first I had seen, and are but little visited by travellers; and though I afterward saw all that were in Egypt, I still consider these well worth a visit. Of the first we entered, the entrance-chamber was perhaps forty feet square, and adjoining it on the same range were five or six others, of which the entrance-chambers had about the same dimensions. The ceilings were covered with paintings, finished with exquisite taste and delicacy, and in some places fresh as if just executed; and on the walls were hieroglyphics enough to fill volumes. Behind the principal chamber were five or six others nearly as large, with smaller ones on each side, and running back perhaps 150 feet. The back chambers were so dark, and their atmosphere was so unwholesome, that it was unpleasant, and perhaps unsafe, to explore them; if we went in far, there was always a loud rushing noise, and, as Paul suggested, their innermost recesses might now be the abode of wild beasts. Wishing to see what caused the noise, and at the same time to keep out of harm's way,

we stationed ourselves near the back door of the entrance-chamber, and I fired my gun within; a stream of fire lighted up the darkness of the sepulchral chamber, and the report went grumbling and roaring into the innermost recesses, rousing their occupants to phrensy. There was a noise like the rushing of a strong wind; the light was dashed from Paul's hand; a soft skinny substance struck against my face; and thousands of bats, wild with fright, came whizzing forth from every part of the tomb to the only avenue of escape. We threw ourselves down and allowed the ugly frightened birds to pass over us, and then hurried out ourselves. For a moment I felt guilty; the beastly birds, driven to the light of day, were dazzled by the glorious sun, and, flying and whirling blindly about, were dashing themselves against the rocky side of the mountain and falling dead at its base. Cured of all wish to explore very deeply, but at the same time relieved from all fears, we continued going from tomb to tomb, looking at the pictures on the walls, endeavouring to make out the details, admiring the beauty and freshness of the colours, and speculating upon the mysterious hieroglyphics which mocked our feeble knowledge; we were in one of the last when we were startled by a noise different from any we had yet heard, and from the door leading to the dark recesses within, foaming, roaring, and gnashing his teeth, out ran an enormous wolf; close upon his heels, in hot pursuit, came another, and almost at the door of

the tomb they grappled, fought, growled fearfully, rolled over, and again the first broke loose and fled; another chase along the side of the mountain, another grapple, a fierce and desperate struggle, and then they rolled over the side, and we lost sight of them. The whole affair had been so sudden, the scene so stirring, and the interest so keen, that Paul and I had stood like statues, our whole souls thrown into our eyes, and following the movements of the furious beasts. Paul was the first to recover himself; and, as soon as the wolves were fairly out of sight, with a characteristic movement, suddenly took the gun out of my hand, and started in pursuit. It is needless to say that he did not go far. But the interest of the day was not yet over. While walking along the edge of the mountain, in spite of bats and beasts, still taking another and another look, my ears were suddenly struck with a loud voice of lamentation coming up from the valley below; and looking in the direction of the city, I saw approaching over the elevated causeway a long funeral procession, and the voice came from the mourners following the corpse. They were evidently coming to the Mohammedan burying-ground at the foot of the mountain, and I immediately left the tombs of the ancient Egyptians to see the burial of one who but yesterday was a dweller in the land.

Being far beyond the regular path for descending, and wishing to intercept the procession before its arrival at the burying-ground, I had something

like the wolf-race I had just beheld to get down in time; unluckily, I had sent Paul back to the place where we had left our cloaks and donkeys and the little girl, with directions to ride round the foot of the hill and meet me at the burying-ground. How I got down I do not know; but I was quietly sitting under a large palm-tree near the cemetery when the procession came up. It approached with funeral banners and devices which I could not make out, but probably containing some precept of the Koran, having reference to death, and the grave, and a paradise of houries; and the loud wailing which had reached me on the top of the mountain, here was almost deafening. First in the strange procession came the beggars, or santons, men who are supposed to lead peculiarly pure and holy lives, denying themselves all luxuries and pleasures, labouring not, and taking no heed for themselves what they shall eat nor what they shall drink, and living upon the willing though necessarily stinted charity of their miserable countrymen. I could read all this at the first glance; I could see that poverty had been their portion through life; that they had drunk the bitter cup to its very dregs. Their beards were long, white, and grizzled; over their shoulders and breasts they wore a scanty covering of rags, fastened together with strings, and all with some regard to propriety. This ragged patchwork covered their breasts and shoulders only, the rest of their bodies being entirely naked, and they led the funeral procession among a throng of

spectators, with heads erect and proud step, under what, anywhere else, would be called an indecent and shameless exposure of person, unbecoming their character as saints or holy beggars. Over their shoulders were slung by ropes large jars of water, which for charity's sweet sake, and for the love of the soul of the deceased, they carried to distribute gratis at his grave. After them came a parcel of boys, then the sheiks and two officers of the town, then the corpse, tightly wrapped from head to foot in a red sash, on a bier carried by four men; then a procession of men, and more than a hundred women in long cotton dresses, covering their heads and drawn over their faces, so as to hide all except their eyes.

They were the last, but by no means the least important part of the procession, as by general consent the whole business of mourning devolved upon them; and the poor Arab who was then being trundled to his grave had no reason to complain of their neglect. Smiles and tears are a woman's weapons; and she is the most to be admired, and has profited most by the advantage of education, who knows how to make the best use of them. Education and refinement can no doubt do wonders; but the most skilful lady in civilized life might have taken lessons from these untutored Egyptians. A group of them were standing near me, chattering and laughing until the procession came up, when all at once big tears started from their eyes, and their cries and lamentations rent

the air, as if their hearts were breaking. I was curious to see the forms of a modern burial in Egypt, but I hesitated in following. Some of the Arabs had looked rudely at me in passing, and I did not know whether the bigoted Mussulmans would tolerate the intrusion of a stranger and a Christian. I followed on, however, looking out for Paul, and fortunately met him at the gate of the burying-ground. The sheik was standing outside, ordering and arranging; and I went up to him with Paul, and asked if there was any objection to my entering; he not only permitted it, but, telling me to follow him, with a good deal of noise and an unceremonious use of the scabbard of his sword, he cleared a way through the crowd, and even roughly breaking through the ranks of the women, so as materially to disturb their business of mourning, and putting back friends and relations, gave me a place at the head of the tomb. It was square, with a round top, built of Nile mud, and whitewashed; two men were engaged in opening it, which was done simply by pulling away a few stones and scooping out the sand with their hands. In front, but a few feet from the door, sat the old mother, so old as to be hardly conscious of what was passing around her, and probably long before this buried in the same grave; near her was the widow of the deceased, dressed in silk, and sitting on the bare earth with an air of total abandonment; her hands, her breast, the top of her head and her face, plastered with thick coats of

mud, and her eyes fixed upon the door of the tomb. A few stones remained to be rolled away, and the door, or rather the hole, was opened; the two men crawled in, remained a minute or two, came out, and went for the corpse. The poor widow followed them with her eyes, and when they returned with the body, carefully and slowly dragging it within the tomb, and the feet and the body had disappeared, and the beloved head was about to be shut for ever from her eyes, she sprang up, and wildly and passionately throwing her arms towards the tomb, broke forth in a perfect phrensy of grief. "Twenty years we have lived together; we have always lived happily; you loved me, you were kind to me, you gave me bread; what shall I do now? I will never marry again. Every day I will come and weep at your tomb, my love, my life, my soul, my heart, my eyes. Remember me to my father, remember me to my brother," &c. &c. I do not remember half she said; but as Paul translated it to me it seemed the very soul of pathos; and all this time she was walking distractedly before the door of the tomb, wringing her hands, and again and again plastering her face and breast with mud. The mourning women occasionally joined in chorus, the santons ostentatiously crying out, "Water, for the love of God and the Prophet, and the soul of the deceased;" and a little girl about seven or eight years old was standing on the top of the tomb, naked as she was born, eating a piece of sugar-cane. Paul looked rather

suspiciously upon the whole affair, particularly upon that part where she avowed her determination never to marry again. "The old Beelzebub," said he; "she will marry to-morrow if any one asks her."

Leaving the burying-ground, we returned to Siout. On my way I made acquaintance with the governor, not only of that place, but also of all Upper Egypt, a pacha with two or three tails; a great man by virtue of his office, and much greater in his own conceit. I saw coming towards me a large, fine-looking man, splendidly dressed, mounted on a fine horse, with two runners before him, and several officers and slaves at his side. I was rather struck with his appearance, and looked at him attentively as I passed, without, however, saluting him, which I would have done had I known his rank. I thought he returned my gaze with interest; and in passing each continued to keep his eyes fixed upon the other, to such a degree that we must either have twisted our necks off or turned our bodies. The latter was the easier for both; and we kept turning, he on horseback and I on foot, until we found ourselves directly facing each other, and then both stopped. His guards and attendants turned with him, and, silent as statues, stood looking at me. I had nothing to say, and so I stood and said nothing. His mightiness opened his lips, and his myrmidons, with their hands on their sword-hilts, looked as if they expected an order to deal with me for my unparal-

leled assurance. His mightiness spoke, and I have no doubt the Turks around him thought it was with the *ne plus ultra* of dignity, and wondered that such words had not confounded me. But it was not very easy to confound me with words I could not understand, although I could perceive that there was nothing very gracious in his manner. Paul answered, and after the governor had turned his back, told me that his first address was, "Do I owe you any thing?" which he followed up by slapping his horse on the neck, and saying, in the same tone, "Is this your horse?" Paul says that he answered in a tone of equal dignity, "A cat may look at a king;" though, from his pale cheeks and quivering lips, I am inclined to doubt whether he gave so doughty a reply.

I was exceedingly amused at the particulars of the interview, and immediately resolved to cultivate the acquaintance. During the long days and nights of my voyage up the Nile, in poring over my books and maps I had frequently found my attention fixed upon the great Oasis in the Libyan desert. A caravan-road runs through it from Siout, and I resolved, since I had had the pleasure of one interview with his excellency, to learn from him the particulars of time, danger, &c. I therefore hurried down to the boat for my firman, and, strong in this as if I had the pacha at my right hand, I proceeded forthwith to the palace; but my friend observed as much state in giving audience as the pacha himself. Being the season of the Ramadan,

he received nobody on business until after the evening meal, and so my purpose was defeated. Several were already assembled at the gate, waiting the appointed hour; but it did not suit my humour to sit down with them and exercise my patience, and perhaps feel the littleness of Turkish tyranny in being kept to the last, so I marched back to my boat.

It was still an hour before sunset; my men had laid in their stock of bread, the wind was fair, a boat of the largest size, belonging to a Turkish officer, with a long red satin flag, was just opening her large sails to go up the river, and, bidding good-by to my little Arab girl, we cast off our fastening to the bank at Siout. It was the first day I had spent on shore in the legitimate business of a tourist, and by far the most pleasant since I left Cairo.

CHAPTER VI.

Small Favours thankfully received.—Slavery in Egypt.—How to catch a Crocodile.—An elaborate Joke.—Imaginary Perils.—Arabs not so bad as they might be.

The next day at about four o'clock we arrived at Djiddeh, formerly the capital of Upper Egypt, and the largest town on the Nile. My humour for going to the Oasis had been growing upon me, and finding that there was a track from this place also, I landed, and working my way through the streets and bazars, went to the governor's palace. As I before remarked, the place where the governor lives is always by extraordinary courtesy called a palace.

The governor was not at home; he had gone to Siout, on a visit to my handsome friend the governor there, but he had left his deputy, who gave us such an account of the journey and its perils as almost put an end to it for ever, at least so far as Paul was concerned. He said that the road was dangerous, and could not be travelled except under the protection of a caravan or guard of soldiers; that the Arabs among the mountains were a fierce and desperate people, and would certainly cut the throats of any unprotected travellers. He added, however, that a caravan was about form-

ing, which would probably be ready in four or five days, and that perhaps before that time the governor would return and give me a guard of soldiers. It did not suit my views to wait the uncertain movements of a caravan, nor did it suit my pocket to incur the expense of a guard. So, thanking the gentleman for his civility (he had given us pipes and coffee, as usual), I bade him good-by, and started for my boat; but I had not gone far before I found him trotting at my heels. In the palace he had sat with his legs crossed, with as much dignity as the governor himself could have displayed; but as soon as he slid down from the divan he seemed to have left dignity for his betters, and pounced upon Paul for "bucksheesh." I gave him five piasters (about equal to a quarter of a dollar), for which the deputy of the Governor of Djiddeh, formerly the capital of Upper Egypt, laid his hand upon his heart and invoked upon my head the blessing of Allah and the Prophet.

At Djiddeh, for the first time, I saw carried on one of the great branches of trade on the Nile, a trade which once stained the annals of our own country, and the fatal effects of which we still continue to experience. There were two large boat-loads—perhaps five or six hundred slaves—collected at Dongola and Sennaar, probably bought from their parents for a shawl, a string of beads, or some trifling article of necessity. Born under the burning sun of the tropics, several of them had died of cold, even before reaching the latitude of

Lower Egypt; many were sick, and others dying. They were arranged on board the boats and on the banks, in separate groups, according to their state of health. Among them was every variety of face and complexion, and it was at once startling and painful to note the gradations of man descending to the brute. I could almost see the very line of separation. Though made in God's image, there seemed no ray of the divinity within them. They did not move upon all-fours, it is true, but they sat, as I had seen them in the slave-market at Cairo, perfectly naked, with their long arms wound round their legs, and their chins resting upon their knees, precisely as we see monkeys, baboons, and apes; and as, while looking at these miserable caricatures of our race, I have sometimes been almost electrified by a transient gleam of resemblance to humanity, so here I was struck with the closeness of man's approach to the inferior grade of animal existence. Nor was there much difference between the sick and well; the sick were more pitiable, for they seemed doomed to die, and death to any thing that lives is terrible; but the strong and lusty men and women were bathing in the river; and when they came out they smeared themselves with oil, and laid their shining bodies in the sun, and slept like brutes. To such as these, slavery to the Turk is not a bitter draught; philanthropists may refine and speculate, and liberals declaim, but what is liberty to men dying for bread, and what hardship is there

in being separated from the parents who have sold them, or doomed to labour where that labour is light compared with what they must endure at home?

In the East slavery exists now precisely as it did in the days of the patriarchs. The slave is received into the family of a Turk, in a relation more confidential and respectable than that of an ordinary domestic; and when liberated, which very often happens, stands upon the same footing with a free man. The curse does not rest upon him for ever; he may sit at the same board, dip his hand in the same dish, and, if there are no other impediments, may marry his master's daughter.

In the evening we left Djiddeh, and about ten o'clock hauled up to the bank, and rested quietly till morning. Next day the wind was fair, but light, and I passed it on shore with my gun. This same gun, by-the-way, proved a better companion to me on my journey than I had expected. There were always plenty of pigeons; indeed, advancing in Upper Egypt, one of the most striking features in the villages on the Nile is the number of pigeon-cots, built of mud in the form of a sugar-loaf, and whitewashed. They are much more lofty than any of the houses, and their winged tenants constitute a great portion of the wealth of the villagers. It is not, however, allowable to shoot at these, the laws regulating the right of property in animals *feræ naturæ* being as well established on the banks of the Nile as at West-

minster Hall; but there are hundreds of pigeons in the neighbourhood of every village, which no one claims. In some places, too, there is fine sport in hunting hares; and if a man can bring himself to it, he may hunt the gazelle, and almost the whole line of the river, at least above Siout, abounds with ducks and geese. These, however, are very wild, and moreover very tough, and, except for the sport, are not worth shooting. No keeping and no cooking could make them tender, and good masticators were thrown away upon them.

But the standing shots on the Nile are crocodiles and pelicans. The former still abound, as in the days when the Egyptian worshipped them; and as you see one basking in the sun, on some little bank of sand, even in the act of firing at him, you cannot help going back to the time when the passing Egyptian would have bowed to him as to a god; and you may imagine the descendant of the ancient river-god, as he feels a ball rattling against his scaly side, invoking the shades of his departed worshippers, telling his little ones of the glory of his ancestors, and cursing the march of improvement, which has degraded him from the deity of a mighty people into a target for strolling tourists. I always liked to see a crocodile upon the Nile, and always took a shot at him, for the sake of the associations. In one place I counted in sight at one time twenty-one, a degree of fruitfulness in the river probably equal to that of the time

when each of them would have been deemed worthy of a temple while living, and embalment and a mighty tomb when dead.

While walking by the river-side, I met an Arab with a gun in his hand, who pointed to the dozing crocodiles on a bank before us, and, marking out a space on the ground, turned to the village a little back, and made me understand that he had a large crocodile there. As I was some distance in advance of my boat, I accompanied him, and found one fourteen feet long, stuffed with straw, and hanging under a palm-tree. He had been killed two days before, after a desperate resistance, having been disabled with bullets and pierced with spears in a dozen places. I looked at him with interest and compassion, reflecting on the difference between his treatment and that experienced by his ancestors, but nevertheless opened a negotiation for a purchase; and though our languages were as far apart as our countries, bargaining sharpens the intellect to such a degree that the Arab and I soon came to an understanding, and I bought him as he hung, for forty piasters and a charge of gunpowder. I had conceived a joke for my own amusement. A friend had requested me to buy for him some mosaics, cameos, &c., in Italy, which circumstances had prevented me from doing, and I had written to him, regretting my inability, and telling him that I was going to Egypt, and would send him a mummy or a pyramid; and when I saw the scaly monster hanging

by the tail, with his large jaws distended by a stick, it struck me that he would make a still better substitute for cameos and mosaics, and that I would box him up, and, without any advice, send him to my friend.

The reader may judge how desperately I was pushed for amusement, when I tell him that I chuckled greatly over this happy conceit; and having sent my Nubian to hail the boat as she was coming by, I followed with my little memorial. The whole village turned out to escort us, more than a hundred Arabs, men, women, and children, and we dragged him down with a pomp and circumstance worthy of his better days. Paul looked a little astonished when he saw me with a rope over my shoulder, leading the van of this ragged escort, and rather turned up his nose when I told him my joke. I had great difficulty in getting my prize on board, and when I had got him there, he deranged every thing else; but the first day I was so tickled, that I could have thrown all my other cargo overboard rather than him. The second day the joke was not so good, and the third I grew tired of it, and tumbled my crocodile into the river. I followed him with my eye, as his body floated down the stream; it was moonlight, and the creaking of the water-wheel on the banks sounded like the moaning spirit of an ancient Egyptian, indignant at the murder and profanation of his god. It was perhaps hardly worth while to mention this little circumstance, but it amused me for a day or two,

brought me into mental contact with friends at home, and gave me the credit of having myself shot a crocodile, any one of which was worth all the trouble it cost me. If the reader will excuse a bad pun, in consideration of its being my first and last, it was not a *dry* joke; for in getting the crocodile on board I tumbled over, and, very unintentionally on my part, had a January bath in the Nile.

During nearly the whole of that day I was walking on the bank of the river; there was more tillable land than usual on the Arabian side, and I continually saw the Arabs, naked or with a wreath of grass around their loins, drawing water to irrigate the ground, in a basket fastened to a pole, like one of our oldfashioned well-poles.

On the seventeenth we approached Dendera. I usually dined at one o'clock, because it was then too hot to go on shore, and also, to tell the truth, because it served to break the very long and tedious day. I was now about four hours from Dendera by land, of which two and a half were desert, the Libyan sands here coming down to the river. It was a fine afternoon, there was no wind, and I hoped by walking to have a view of the great temple before night. It was warm enough then; but as it regularly became very cold towards evening, I told my Nubian to follow me with my cloak. To my surprise he objected. It was the first time he had done so! He was always glad to go ashore with me, as indeed were they all, and it was con-

sidered that I was showing partiality in always selecting him. I asked one of the others, and found that he, and, in fact, all of them, made objections, on the ground that it was a dangerous road.

This is one of the things which vex a traveller in Egypt, and in the East generally. He will often find the road which he wishes to travel a dangerous one, and though no misadventure may have happened on it for years, he will find it impossible to get his Arabs to accompany him. My rais took the matter in hand, began kicking them ashore, and swore they should all go. This I would not allow. I knew that the whole course of the Nile was safe as the streets of London; that no accident had happened to a traveller since the pacha had been on the throne; and that women and children might travel with perfect safety from Alexandria to the Cataracts; and vexed with their idle fears, after whipping Paul over their shoulders, who I saw was quite as much infected as any of them, I went ashore alone. Paul seemed quietly making up his mind for some desperate movement; without a word, he was arranging the things about the boat, shutting up the doors of the cabin, buttoning his coat, and with my cloak under his arm and a sword in his hand, he jumped ashore and followed me. He had not gone far, however, before his courage began to fail. The Arabs, whom we found at their daily labour drawing water, seemed particularly black, naked, and hairy. They gave dubious and suspicious an-

swers, and when we came to the edge of the desert he began to grumble outright; he did not want to be shot down like a dog; if we were strong enough to make a stout resistance it would be another thing, &c., &c. In truth, the scene before us was dreary enough, the desert commencing on the very margin of the river, and running back to the eternal sands of Africa. Paul's courage seemed to be going with the green soil we were leaving behind us; and as we advanced where the grass seemed struggling to resist the encroachments of the desert, he was on the point of yielding to the terror of his own imagination, until I suggested to him that we could see before us the whole extent of desert we were to cross; that there was not a shrub or brush to interrupt the view, and not a living thing moving that could do us harm. He then began to revive; it was not for himself, but for me, he feared. We walked on for about an hour, when, feeling that it was safe to trust me alone, and being tired, he sat down on the bank, and I proceeded. Fear is infectious. In about half an hour more I met three men, who had to me a peculiarly cut-throat appearance; they spoke, but I of course could not understand them. At length, finding night approaching, I turned back to meet the boat, and saw that the three Arabs had turned too, and were again advancing to meet me, which I thought a very suspicious movement. Paul's ridiculous fears had completely infected me, and I would have dodged them if I could; but

there was no bush to hide behind. I almost blushed at myself for thinking of dodging three Arabs, when I had a double-barrelled gun in my hand, and a pair of pistols in my sash; but I must say I was not at all sorry, before I met them again, to hear Paul shouting to me, and a moment after to see my boat coming up under full sail.

One who has never met an Arab in the desert can have no conception of his terrible appearance. The worst pictures of the Italian bandits or Greek mountain robbers I ever saw, are tame in comparison. I have seen the celebrated Gasperini, who ten years ago kept in terror the whole country between Rome and Naples, and who was so strong as to negotiate and make a treaty with the pope. I saw him surrounded by nearly twenty of his comrades; and when he told me he could not remember how many murders he had committed, he looked civil and harmless compared with a Bedouin of the desert. The swarthy complexion of the latter, his long beard, his piercing coal-black eyes, half-naked figure, an enormous sword slung over his back, and a rusty matchlock in his hand, make the best figure for a painter I ever saw—but happily he is not so bad as he looks to be.

Gimber sc.

TEMPLE AT DENDERA.

Vol I p. 105.

CHAPTER VII.

The Temple of Dendera.—Practice against Theory.—Regulating the Sun.—The French at Thebes.—The Curse of Pharaoh.—An Egyptian Tournament.—Preparations for Dinner.—An English travelling Lady.

Sunday, January 12. At eight o'clock in the morning we arrived at Ghizeh, where, leaving my boat and crew to make a few additions to our stock, Paul and I crossed over in a sort of ferry-boat to Dendera.

The temple of Dendera is one of the finest specimens of the arts in Egypt, and the best preserved of any on the Nile. It stands about a mile from the river, on the edge of the desert, and, coming up, may be seen at a great distance. The temples of the Egyptians, like the chapels in Catholic countries, in many instances stand in such positions as to arrest the attention of the passer-by; and the Egyptian boatman, long before he reached it, might see the open doors of the temple of Dendera, reminding him of his duty to the gods of his country. I shall not attempt any description of this beautiful temple; its great dimensions, its magnificent propylon or gateway, portico, and columns; the sculptured figures on the walls; the spirit of the devices and their admirable execution; the winged globe and the sacred vulture, the hawk

and the ibis, Isis, Osiris, and Horus, gods, goddesses, priests, and women; harps, altars, and people clapping their hands, and the whole interior covered with hieroglyphics and paintings, in some places, after a lapse of more than 2000 years, in colours fresh as if but the work of yesterday.

It was the first temple I had seen in Egypt; and although I ought not perhaps to say so, I was disappointed. I found it beautiful, far more beautiful than I expected; but, look at it as I would, wander around it as I would, the ruins of the Acropolis at Athens rose before me; the severe and stately form of the Parthenon, the beautiful fragment of the temple of Minerva, and the rich Corinthian columns of the temple of Jupiter, came upon me with a clearness and vividness I could not have conceived. The temple is more than half buried in the sand. For many years it has formed the nucleus of a village. The Arabs have built their huts within and around it, range upon range, until they reached and almost covered the tops of the temple. Last year, for what cause I know not, they left their huts in a body, and the village, which for many years had existed there, is now entirely deserted. The ruined huts still remain around the columns and against the broken walls. On the very top is a chamber, beautifully sculptured, and formed for other uses, now blackened with smoke, and the polished floors strewed with fragments of pottery and culinary vessels.

Nor is this the worst affliction of the traveller

at Dendera. He sees there other ruins, more lamentable than the encroachments of the desert and the burial in the sand, worse than the building and ruin of successive Arab villages; he sees wanton destruction by the barbarous hand of man. The beautiful columns, upon which the skilful and industrious Egyptian artist had laboured with his chisel for months, and perhaps for years, which were then looked upon with religious reverence, and ever since with admiration, have been dashed into a thousand pieces, to build bridges and forts for the great modern reformer.

It is strange how the organ of mischief develops itself when it has something to work upon. I sat down upon the sculptured fragments of a column, which perhaps at this moment forms the abutment of some bridge, and, looking at the wreck around me, even while admiring and almost reverencing the noble ruin, began breaking off the beautifully chiselled figure of a hawk, and perhaps in ten minutes had demolished the work of a year. I felt that I was doing wrong, but excused myself by the plea that I was destroying to preserve, and saving that precious fragment from the ruin to which it was doomed, to show at home as a specimen of the skill of the Old World. So far I did well enough; but I went farther. I was looking intently, though almost unconsciously, at a pigeon on the head of Isis, the capital of one of the front columns of the temple. It was a beautiful shot—

could not have been finer if the temple had been built expressly to shoot pigeons from. I fired: the shot went smack into the beautifully sculptured face of the goddess, and put out one of her eyes; the pigeon fell at the foot of the column, and while the goddess seemed to weep over her fallen state, and to reproach me for this renewed insult to herself and to the arts, I picked up the bird and returned to my boat, and did not leave it again that day.

On board I had constantly a fund of amusement in the movements of my Arab crew. During the Ramadan, a period of thirty days, no good Mussulman eats, drinks, or smokes, from the rising to the setting of the sun. My men religiously observed this severe requisition of the Koran, although sometimes they were at work at the oar under a burning sun nearly all day. They could form a pretty shrewd conjecture as to the time of the setting of the sun, but nevertheless they fell into the habit of regulating themselves by my watch, and I did not think the Prophet would be particularly hard upon them, if I sometimes brought the day to a close half an hour or so before its time. Sometimes I was rather too liberal, but out of respect for me they considered the sun set when I told them it was; and it was interesting to see them regularly every evening, one after another, mount the upper deck, and, spreading out their cloaks, with their faces towards the tomb of the Prophet, kneel down and pray.

On the 20th the wind was light but favourable, and part of the time the men were on shore towing with the cords. We were now approaching the most interesting spot on the Nile—perhaps in the world. Thebes, immortal Thebes, was before us, and a few hours more would place us among her ruins. Towards noon the wind died away, and left us again to the slow movement of the tow-line. This was too slow for my then excited humour. I could not bear that the sun should again set before I stood among the ruins of the mighty city; and landing on the right side of the river, I set out to walk. About an hour before dark the lofty columns of the great temple at Luxor, and the still greater of Carnac, were visible. The glowing descriptions of travellers had to a certain extent inflamed my imagination. Denon, in his account of the expedition to Egypt, says that when the French soldiers first came in sight of Thebes, the whole army involuntarily threw down their arms and stood in silent admiration; a sublime idea, whether true or not; but I am inclined to think that the French soldiers would have thrown down their arms, and clapped their hands with much greater satisfaction, if they had seen a living city and prospect of good quarters. For my own part, without at this moment referring to particulars, I was disappointed in the first view of the ruins of Thebes. We walked on the right side of the river, the valley as usual running back to the desert.

It was nearly dark when we arrived at the ruined village, which now occupies part of the site of the once magnificent city. The plough has been driven over the ruins of the temples, and grass was growing where palaces had stood. A single boat was lying along the bank, a single flag, the red cross of England, was drooping lazily against the mast; and though it be death to my reputation as a sentimental traveller, at that moment I hailed the sight of that flag with more interest than the ruined city. Since I left Cairo I had seen nothing but Arabs; for three weeks I had not opened my lips, except to Paul; and, let me tell the reader, that though a man may take a certain degree of pleasure in groping among ruins, in travelling in strange and out-of-the-way places, he cannot forget the world he has left behind him. In a land of comparative savages, he hails the citizen of any civilized country as his brother; and when on the bank of the river I was accosted in my native tongue, by a strapping fellow in a Turkish dress, though in the broken accents of a Sicilian servant, I thought it the purest English I had ever heard. I went on board the boat, and found two gentlemen, of whom I had heard at Cairo, who had been to Mount Sinai, from thence to Hor, by the Red Sea to Cosseir, and thence across the desert to Thebes, where they had only arrived that day. I sat with them till a late hour. I cannot flatter myself that the evening passed as agreeably to them as to me, for

they had been a party of six, and I alone; but I saw them afterward, and our acquaintance ripened into intimacy; and though our lots are cast in different places, and we shall probably never meet again, if I do not deceive myself, neither will ever forget the acquaintance formed that night on the banks of the Nile.

Our conversation during the evening was desultory and various. We mounted the pyramids, sat down among the ruins of temples, groped among tombs, and, mixed up with these higher matters, touched incidentally upon rats, fleas, and all kinds of vermin. I say we touched incidentally upon these things; but, to tell the truth, we talked so much about them, that when I went to my boat I fairly crawled. I have omitted to mention that the curse provoked by Pharaoh still rests upon the land, and that rats, fleas, and those detestable animals into which Aaron converted the sands, are still the portion of the traveller and sojourner in Egypt. I had suffered considerably during the last four days, but, not willing to lose a favourable wind, had put off resorting to the usual means of relief. To-night, however, there was no enduring it any longer; the rats ran, shrieked, and shouted, as if celebrating a jubilee on account of some great mortality among the cats, and the lesser animals came upon me as if the rod of Aaron had been lifted for my special affliction. I got up during the night, and told Paul that we would remain here a day, and early in the morning they must

sink the boat. Before I woke we were half across the river, being obliged to cross in order to find a convenient place for sinking. I was vexed at having left so abruptly my new companions; but it was too late to return. We pitched our tent on the bank, and immediately commenced unlading the boat.

On a point a little above, in front of a large house built by the French, at the south end of the temple of Luxor, and one of the most beautiful positions on the Nile, were two tents. I knew that they belonged to the companions of the two gentlemen on the opposite side, and that there was a lady with them. I rather put myself out of the way for it, and the first time I met the three gentlemen on the bank, I was not particularly pleased with them. I may have deceived myself, but I thought they did not greet me as cordially as I was disposed to greet every traveller I met in that remote country. True, I was not a very inviting looking object; but, as I said to myself, "Take the beam out of your own eye, and then—" true, too, their beards were longer, and one of them was redder than mine, but I did not think that gave them any right to put on airs. In short, I left them with a sort of go-to-the-devil feeling, and did not expect to have any more to do with them. I therefore strolled away, and spent the day rambling among the ruins of the temples of Luxor and Carnac. I shall not now attempt any description of these temples, nor of the ruins of Thebes generally (no

easy task), but reserve the whole until my return from the Cataracts.

At about three o'clock I returned to my tent. It was the first day of the feast of Bairam, the thirty days of fasting (Ramadan) being just ended. It was a great day at Luxor; the bazars were supplied with country products, the little cafterias were filled with smokers, indemnifying themselves for their long abstinence, and the fellahs were coming in from the country. On my return from Carnac I for the first time saw dromedaries, richly caparisoned, mounted by well-armed Arabs, and dashing over the ground at full gallop. I had never seen dromedaries before except in caravans, accommodating themselves to the slow pace of the camel, and I did not think the clumsy, lumbering animal could carry himself so proudly and move so rapidly. Their movement, however, was very far from realizing the extravagant expression of "swift as the wind," applied to it in the East. I was somewhat fatigued on my return, and Paul met me on the bank with a smiling face, and information that the English party had sent their janizary to ask me to dine with them at six o'clock. Few things tend to give you a better opinion of a man, of his intelligence, his piety, and morals, than receiving from him an invitation to dinner. I am what is called a sure man in such cases, and the reader may suppose that I was not wanting upon this occasion.

It was an excessively hot day. You who were

hovering over your coal fires, or moving about wrapped in cloaks and greatcoats, can hardly believe that on the twentieth of January the Arabs were refreshing their heated bodies by a bath in the Nile, and that I was lying under my tent actually panting for breath. I had plenty to occupy me, but the heat was too intense; the sun seemed to scorch the brain, while the sands blistered the feet. I think it was the hottest day I experienced on the Nile.

While leaning on my elbow, looking out of the door of my tent towards the temple of Luxor, I saw a large body of Arabs, on foot, on dromedaries, and on horseback, coming down towards the river. They came about half way across the sandy plain between the temple and the river, and stopped nearly opposite my tent, so as to give me a full view of all their movements. The slaves and pipe-bearers immediately spread mats on the sand, on which the principal persons seated themselves, and while they were taking coffee and pipes, others were making preparations for equestrian exercises. The forms and ceremonies presented to my mind a lively picture of preparing the lists for a tournament; and the intense heat and scorching sands reminded me of the great passage of arms in Scott's Crusaders, near the Diamond of the Desert, on the shores of the Dead Sea.

The parties were on horseback, holding in their right hands long wooden spears, the lower ends resting on the sand, close together, and forming a

pivot around which their movements were made. They rode round in a circle, with their spears in the sand and their eyes keenly fixed on each other, watching an opportunity to strike; chased, turned, and doubled, but never leaving the pivot; occasionally the spears were raised, crossed, and struck together, and a murmuring ran through the crowd like the cry in the fencing-scene in Hamlet, "a hit, a fair hit," and the parties separated, or again dropped their poles in the centre for another round. The play for some time seemed confined to slaves and dependants, and among them, and decidedly the most skilful, was a young Nubian. His master, a Turk, who was sitting on the mat, seemed particularly pleased with his success.

The whole of this seemed merely a preliminary, designed to stir up the dormant spirit of the masters. For a long time they sat quietly, puffing their pipes, and probably longing for the stimulus of a battle-cry to rouse them from their torpor. At length one of them, the master of the Nubian, slowly rose from the mat and challenged an antagonist. Slowly he laid down his pipe, and took and raised the pole in his hand; but still he was not more than half roused. A fresh horse was brought him, and, without taking off his heavy cloth mantle, he drowsily placed his left foot in the broad shovel stirrup, his right on the rump of the horse behind the saddle, and swung himself into the seat. The first touch of the saddle seemed to rouse him; he took the pole from the hand of his

attendant, gave his horse a severe check, and, driving the heavy corners of the stirrups into his sides, dashed through the sand on a full run. At the other end of the course he stopped, rested a moment or two, then again driving his irons into his horse, dashed back at full speed; and when it seemed as if his next step would carry him headlong among the Turks on the mat, with one jerk he threw his horse back on his haunches, and brought him up from a full run to a dead stop. This seemed to warm him a little; his attendant came up and took off his cloak, under which he had a red silk jacket and white trousers, and again he dashed through the sand and back as before. This time he brought up his horse with furious vehemence; his turban became unrolled, he flew into a violent passion, tore it off and threw it on the sand, and, leaving his play, fiercely struck the spear of his adversary, and the battle at once commenced. The Turk, who had seemed too indolent to move, now showed a fire and energy, and an endurance of fatigue, that would have been terrible in battle. Both horse and rider scorned the blazing sun and burning sands, and round and round they ran, chasing, turning, and doubling within an incredibly small circle, till an approving murmur was heard among the crowd. The trial was now over, and the excited Turk again seated himself upon the mat, and relapsed into a state of calm indifference.

The exercise finished just in time to enable me

to make my toilet for dinner. As there was a lady in the case, I had some doubt whether I ought not to shave, not having performed that operation since I left Cairo; but as I had already seen the gentlemen of the party, and had fallen, moreover, into the fashion of the country, of shaving the head and wearing the turban (one of the greatest luxuries in Egypt, by-the-way), and could not in any event sit with my head uncovered, I determined to stick to the beard; and disguising myself in a clean shirt, and giving directions to my boatmen to be ready to start at ten o'clock, I walked along the bank to the tent of my new friends. I do not know whether my notion in the morning was right, or whether I had misapprehended things, but at any rate I had no reason to complain of my reception now; I think, myself, that there was a difference, which I accounted for in my own way, by ascribing to their discovery that I was an American. I have observed that English meeting abroad, though they would probably stand by each other to the death in a quarrel, are ridiculously shy of each other as acquaintances, on account of the great difference of caste at home. As regards Americans, the case is different, and to them the English display none of that feeling. After I had started on my ramble, Paul had planted my flag at the door of the tent, and among the other advantages which that flag brought me, I included my invitation to dinner, agreeable acquaintances, and one of the most pleasant evenings I spent on

the Nile. Indeed, I hope I may be pardoned a burst of national feeling, and be allowed to say, without meaning any disrespect to any other country, that I would rather travel under the name of an American, than under any other known in Europe. Every American abroad meets a general prepossession in favour of his country, and it is an agreeable truth that the impression made by our countrymen abroad, generally sustains the prepossession. I have met with some, however, who destroyed this good effect, and made themselves disagreeable and gave offence, by a habit of intruding their country and its institutions, and of drawing invidious comparisons, with a pertinacity and self-complacency I never saw in any other people.

But to return to the dinner; a man may make a long digression before a dinner on paper, who would scorn such a thing before a dinner *de facto*. The party consisted of four, a gentleman and his lady, he an honourable and heir to an old and respectable title, a brother of the lady, an ex-captain in the guards, who changed his name and resigned his commission on receiving a fortune from an uncle, and another gentleman, I do not know whether of that family, but bearing one of the proudest names in England. They were all young, the oldest not more than thirty-five, and, not excepting the lady, full of thirst for adventure and travel. I say not excepting the lady; I should rather say that the lady was the life and soul of the party. She was young and beautiful, in the

most attractive style of English beauty; she was married, and therefore dead in law; and as we may say what we will of the dead, I venture to say that she had shone as a beauty and a belle in the proudest circles of England, and was now enjoying more pleasure than Almack's or drawing-rooms could give, rambling among ruins and sleeping under a tent on the banks of the Nile. They had travelled in Spain, had just come from Mount Sinai and the Red Sea, and they talked of Bagdad. I had often met on the Continent with Englishmen who "were out," as they called it, for a certain time, one year or two years, but this party had no fixed time; they "were out" for as long as suited their humour. To them I am indebted for the most interesting part of my journey in the East, for they first suggested to me the route by Petra and Arabia Petræa. We made a calculation by which we hoped, in reference to what each had to do, to meet at Cairo and make the attempt together. It was a great exertion of resolution that I did not abandon my own plans, and keep in company with them, but they had too much time for me; a month or two was no object to them, but to me a very great one.

All this and much more, including the expression of a determination, when they had finished their travels in the Old World, to visit us in the New, took place, while we were dining under the tent of the captain and his friend. The table stood in the middle on canteens, about eight inches from

the ground, with a mattress on each side for seats. It was rather awkward sitting, particularly for me, who was next the lady, and in that position felt some of the trammels of conventional life; there was no room to put my legs under the table, and, not anticipating the precise state of things, I had not arranged straps and suspenders, and my feet seemed to be bigger than ever. I doubled them under me; they got asleep, not the quiet and tranquil sleep which makes you forget existence, but the slumber of a troubled conscience, pricking and burning, till human nature could endure it no longer, and I kicked out the offending members with very little regard to elegance of attitude. The ice once broken, I felt at my ease, and the evening wore away too soon. An embargo had been laid upon my tongue so long, that my ears fairly tingled with pleasure at hearing myself talk. It was, in fact, a glorious evening; a bright spot that I love to look back upon, more than indemnifying me for weeks of loneliness. I sat with them till a late hour; and when I parted, I did not feel as if it was the first time I had seen them, or think it would be the last, expecting to meet them a few days afterward at the Cataracts. But I never saw them again; we passed each other on the river during the night. I received several messages from them; and at Beyrout, after I had finished my tour in Arabia Petræa and the Holy Land, I received a letter from them, still on the Nile. I should be extremely sorry to think that we are never to meet

again, and hope that when wearied with rambling among the ruins of the Old World, they will execute their purpose of visiting America, and that here we may talk over our meeting on the banks of the Nile. I went back to my boat to greater loneliness than before, but there was a fine wind, and in a few minutes we were again under way. I sat on deck till a late hour, smoked two or three pipes, and retired to my little cabin.

CHAPTER VII.

The Rock of the Chain.—Ravages of the Plague.—Deserted Quarries.—A youthful Navigator.—A recollection of Sam Patch.—Ancient Inscriptions.—A perplexed Major-domo.—A Dinner without parallel.—An awkward Discovery.

The next day and the next still brought us favourable winds and strong, and we were obliged to take down one of our tall latteens, but made great progress with the other, even against the rapid current of the river. The Nile here was very wide, the water turbulent, and the waves rolling with such violence that Paul became sea-sick; and, if it had not been for the distant banks, we could hardly have believed ourselves on the bosom of a river, one thousand miles from the ocean.

In the evening we were approaching Hadjar Silsily, the Rock of the Chain, the narrowest part of the river, where the mountains of Africa and Arabia seem marching to meet each other, and stopping merely to leave a narrow passage for the river. Tradition says that in ancient days an iron chain was drawn across the narrow strait, which checked the current; and the Arab boatman believes he can still see, in the sides of the moun-

tains, the marks of the rings and bolts to which the miraculous chain was fastened.

We hauled up alongside of the bank for part of the night, and the next morning, with a strong and favourable wind, were approaching Assouan, the last town in Egypt, standing on the borders of Ethiopia and at the foot of the Cataracts of the Nile. For some time before reaching Assouan, the river becomes broader and the mountains again retire, leaving space for the islands and a broad surface for the body of the river. About three miles this side, on the Arabian bank, is the new palace of Ibrahim, where he retired and shut himself up during the terrible plague of last year. On the right, the top of the Libyan mountain is crowned with the tomb of a Marabout sheik, and about half way down are the ruins of a convent, picturesque and interesting, as telling that before the crescent came and trampled it under foot, the cross, the symbol of the Christian faith, once reared its sacred form even in the interior of Africa. In front is the beautiful Island of Elephantina, with a green bank sloping down to the river. On the left are rugged mountains; and projecting in rude and giant masses into the river, are the rocks of dark gray granite, from which came the mighty obelisks and monuments that adorned the ancient temples of Egypt. The little town of Assouan stands on the bank of the river, almost hid among palm-trees; and back at a distance on the height are the ruins of the old city. From the deck of

my boat, the approach to the Cataracts presented by far the finest scene on the Nile, possessing a variety and a wildness equally striking and beautiful, after the monotonous scenery along the whole ascent of the river. With streamers gallantly flying I entered the little harbour, and with a feeling of satisfaction that amply repaid me for all its vexations, I looked upon the end of my journey. I would have gone to the second cataract if time had been no object to me, or if I had had at that time any idea of writing a book, as the second cataract is the usual terminus for travellers on the Nile; and a man who returns to Cairo without having been there, is not considered entitled to talk much about his voyage up the river.

I am perhaps publishing my own want of taste, when I say that the notion of going to the great Oasis had taken such a hold of me, that it was mainly for this object that I sacrificed the voyage to the second cataract. With the feeling, therefore, that here was the end of my journey in this direction, I jumped upon the bank, and having been pent up on board for two days, I put myself in rapid action, and, in one of the cant phrases of continental tourists, began to "knock down the lions."

My first move was to the little town of Assouan, but here I found little to detain me. It was better built than most of the towns on the Nile, and has its street of bazars; the slave-bazars being by far the best supplied of any. In one of the little

cafterias opposite the slave-market, a Turk meanly dressed, though with arms, and a mouthpiece to his pipe that marked him as a man of rank, attracted my particular attention. He was almost the last of the Mamelukes, but yesterday the lords of Egypt; one of the few who escaped the general massacre of his race, and one of the very few permitted to drag out the remnant of their days in the pacha's dominions. The ruins of the old town are in a singularly high, bold, and commanding situation, overlooking the river, the Cataracts, the Island of Elephantina, and the Arabian desert. More than a thousand years ago, this city contained a large and flourishing population; and some idea may be formed of its former greatness, from the fact that more than twenty thousand of its inhabitants died in one year of the plague. In consequence of the terrible ravages of this scourge, the inhabitants abandoned it; but, still clinging to their ancient homes, commenced building a new town, beginning at the northern wall of the old. The valley here is very narrow; and the desert of Arabia, with its front of dark granite mountains, advances to its bank.

The southern gate of the modern town opens to the sands of the desert, and immediately outside the walls is a large Mohammedan burying-ground, by its extent, and the number of its tombstones, exciting the wonder of the stranger how so small a town could pay such a tribute to the king of terrors. In many places the bodies were not more

than half buried, the loose sand which had been sprinkled over them having been blown away. Sculls, legs, and arms were scattered about in every direction; and in one place we saw a pile of sculls and bones, which seemed to have been collected by some pious hand, to save them from the foot of the passing traveller. In another, the rest of the body still buried, the feet were sticking out, and the naked scull, staring at us from its sightless sockets, seemed struggling to free itself from the bondage of the grave, and claiming the promise of a resurrection from the dead. We buried again these relics of mortality, and hoping it might not be our lot to lay our bones where the grave was so little reverenced, continued our way to the ancient granite-quarries of Syene.

These quarries stand about half an hour's walk from the river, in the bosom of a long range of granite mountains, stretching off into the desert of Arabia. Time and exposure have not touched the freshness of the stone, and the whole of the immense quarry looks as if it was but yesterday that the Egyptian left it. You could imagine that the workman had just gone to his noonday meal; and as you look at the mighty obelisk lying rude and unfinished at your feet, you feel disposed to linger till the Egyptian shall come to resume his work, to carve his mysterious characters upon it, and make it a fit portal for some mighty temple. But the hammer and chisel will never be heard there more. The Egyptian workmen have passed away, and

these immense quarries are now and for ever silent and deserted.

Aside from the great interest of these ancient quarries, it is curious to notice how, long before the force of gunpowder and the art of blasting rocks were known, immense stones were separated from the sides of the mountains, and divided as the artist wished, by the slow process of boring small holes, and splitting them apart with wedges.

I returned by the old city, crossing its burying-ground, which, like that of the new town, told, in language that could not be misunderstood, that before the city was destroyed, it too had paid a large tribute to the grave. This burying-ground has an interest not possessed by any other in Egypt, as it contains, scattered over its extended surface, many tombstones with Coptic inscriptions, the only existing remains of the language of a people who style themselves, and are styled, the descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

It was late in the afternoon as I stood on the height crowned by the ruins of the ancient city, with a momentary feeling of returning loneliness, and gazed upon the sun retiring with glorious splendour towards my far-distant home. I turned my eyes to my boat, and beyond it, at a distance down the river, I saw a boat coming up under full sail, bearing what my now practised eye told me was the English flag. I hurried down, and arrived on the bank in time to welcome to the Cata-

racts of the Nile the two gentlemen I had first met at Thebes.

We spent the evening together, and I abandoned my original intention of taking my own boat up the Cataracts, and agreed to go up with them.

In the morning, after an early breakfast, we started for the Island of Philœ, about eight miles from Assouan, and above all the Cataracts; an island singularly beautiful in situation, and containing the ruins of a magnificent temple. The road lay nearly all the way along the river, commanding a full view of the Cataracts, or rather, if a citizen of a new world may lay his innovating hand upon things consecrated by the universal consent of ages, what we who have heard the roar of Niagara would call simply the "rapids." We set off on shaggy donkeys, without saddle, bridle, or halter. A short distance from Assouan, unmarked by any monument, amid arid sands, we crossed the line which, since the days of Pharaoh, has existed as the boundary between Egypt and Ethiopia. We passed through several villages, standing alone at the foot of the granite mountains, without green or verdure around them, even to the extent of a blade of grass, and irresistibly suggesting the question, "How do the miserable inhabitants live?" It was not the first time I had occasion to remark the effect of blood on physical character, and the strong and marked difference of races among people living under the same sun, and almost on a common soil. In the first village

in Nubia, though not half an hour from Assouan, there is a difference obvious to the most superficial observer, and here, on the very confines of Egypt, it would be impossible to mistake a border Nubian for an Arab of Assouan.

Before arriving at Philœ the river is filled with rocks and islands, and the view becomes singularly bold and striking. At the foot of one of the islands is a sort of ferry, with a very big boat and a very little boy to manage it; we got on board, and were astonished to see with what courage and address the little fellow conducted us among the islands washed by the Cataracts. And it was not a straight-ahead navigation either; he was obliged to take advantage of an eddy to get to one point, jump ashore, tow the boat to another, again drop to another, tow her again, and so on, and all this time the little fellow was at the helm, at the oar, at the rope, leading the chorus of a Nubian song, and ordering his crew, which consisted of three boys and one little girl. In this way we worked to an island inhabited by a few miserable Nubians, and, crossing it, came to the point of the principal cataract (I continue to call it cataract by courtesy), being a fall of about two feet.

And these were the great Cataracts of the Nile, whose roar in ancient days affrighted the Egyptian boatmen, and which history and poetry have invested with extraordinary and ideal terrors! The traveller who has come from a country as far distant as mine, bringing all that freshness of feeling with

which a citizen of the New World turns to the storied wonders of the Old, and has roamed over the mountains and drunk of the rivers of Greece, will have found himself so often cheated by the exaggerated accounts of the ancients, the vivid descriptions of poets, and his own imagination, that he will hardly feel disappointed when he stands by this apology for a cataract.

Here the Nubian boys had a great feat to show, viz., jump into the cataract and float down to the point of the island. The inhabitants of the countries bordering on the Nile are great swimmers, and the Nubians are perhaps the best of all; but this was no great feat. The great and ever-to-be-lamented Sam Patch would have made the Nubians stare, and shown them, in his own pithy phrase, "that some folks could do things as well as other folks;" and I question if there is a cataract on the Nile, at which that daring diver would not have turned up his nose in scorn. We returned by the same way we had come, and under the same guidance, augmented, however, by a motley collection of men and boys, who had joined us as our escort. In paying for the boat we showed a preference for our little boy, which brought down upon him all the rest, and he had to run to us for protection. We saved him for the present, but left him exposed to one of the evils attendant upon the acquisition of money, all the world over, the difficulty of keeping it, which difficulty in his case was so great physically, that I have no doubt he was

stripped of more than half before we were out of sight.

Getting rid of them, or as many of them as we could, we again mounted our shaggy donkeys, and rode to the Island of Philœ. This island makes one of the most beautiful pictures I ever saw. Perhaps the general monotony of the scenery on the Nile gives it a peculiar beauty; but I think it would be called beautiful anywhere, even among the finest scenes in Italy. It brought forcibly to my mind, but seemed to me far more lovely than, the Lake Maggiore, with the beautiful Isola Bella and Isola Madre. It is entirely unique, a beautiful lusus naturæ, a little island about a thousand feet long and four hundred broad, rising in the centre of a circular bay, which appears to be cut off from the river, and forms a lake surrounded by dark sandstone rocks; carpeted with green to the water's edge, and covered with columns, propylons, and towers, the ruins of a majestic temple. A sunken wall encircles it on all sides, on which, in a few moments, we landed.

I have avoided description of ruins when I could. The fact is, I know nothing of architecture, and never measured any thing in my life; before I came to Egypt I could not tell the difference between a dromos and a propylon, and my whole knowledge of Egyptian antiquities was little more than enough to enable me to distinguish between a mummy and a pyramid. I picked up about enough to answer my purpose, on the spot; but I

have too much charity for my reader to impose my smattering on him. In fact, I have already forgotten more than half of the little that I then learned, and should show but a poor return for his kindness if I were to puzzle him with the use or misuse of technical phrases. Still I must do something; the temples of Egypt must have a place here; for I might as well leave out Jerusalem in the story of a tour through the Holy Land.

The temple of Philœ is a magnificent ruin, four hundred and thirty-five feet in length and one hundred and five in width. It stands at the southwest corner of the island, close upon the bank of the river, and the approach to it is by a grand colonnade, extending two hundred and forty feet along the edge of the river to the grand propylon. The propylon is nearly a hundred feet long, and rises on each side the gateway in two lofty towers, in the form of a truncated pyramid. The front is decorated with sculpture and hieroglyphics; on each side a figure of Isis, twenty feet high, with the moon over her head, and near the front formerly stood two obelisks and two sphinxes, the pedestals and ruins of which still remain. The body of the temple contains eleven chambers, covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics, the figures teinted in the most lively colours, and the ceiling painted azure and studded with stars.

But there are other things which touch the beholder more nearly than the majestic ruins of the

temple—things which carry him from the works of man to a grander and higher subject, that of man himself. On the lofty towers in front of the temple, among the mysterious and unknown writings of the Egyptians, were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, telling that they whose names were there written had come to worship the great goddess Isis; that men had lived and looked upon the sun, moon, and stars, the mountains and the rolling river, and worshipped a mute idol. And again, on the front wall was the sacred cross, the emblem of the Christian faith, and the figures of the Egyptian deities were defaced and plastered over, showing that another race had been there to worship, who scorned and trampled on the gods of the heathen. And again there was an inscription of later days, that in the ruins of the temple carried with it a wild and fearful interest; telling that the thunder of modern war had been heard above the roar of the cataract, and that the arm of the soldier which had struck terror in the frozen regions of the north, had swept the burning sands of Africa. In the grand propylon, among the names of tourists and travellers, in a small plain hand is written—"L'an 6 de la république, le 13 Messidor, une armée Française, commandée par Buonaparte, est descendue à Alexandrie; l'armeé ayant mis, vingt jours après, les Mamelukes en fuite aux pyramides, Dessaix, commandant la première division, les a poursuivi, au de-là des cataractes, où il est arrivé le 13 Ventose, de l'an 7."

Near this was an inscription that to me was far more interesting than all the rest; the name of an early friend. "C—— B——, U. S. of America," written with his own hand. I did not know that he had been here, although I knew that he had been many years from home, and I had read in a newspaper that he had died in Palestine. A thousand recollections crowded upon me, of joys departed, never to return, and made me sad. I wrote my name under his and left the temple.

I was glad to get back to my rascally donkey. If a man were oppressed and borne down with mental anxiety, if he were mourning and melancholy, either from the loss of a friend, or an undigested dinner, I would engage to cure him. I would put him on a donkey without saddle or halter, and if he did not find himself by degrees drawn from the sense of his misery, and worked up into a towering passion, getting off and belabouring his brute with his stick, and forgetting every thing in this world but the obstinacy of the ass, and his own folly in attempting to ride one, man is a more quiet animal than I take him to be.

As I intended going the next day up the Cataracts with my companions, and expected to spend the day on board their boat, I had asked them to dine with me in the evening. After giving the invitation, I held a council with Paul, who told me that the thing was impossible, and with a prudence worthy of Caleb Balderstone, expressed his wonder that I had not worked an invitation out of

them. I told him, however, that the thing was settled, and dine with me they must. My housekeeping had never been very extravagant, and macaroni, rice, and fowl had been my standing dishes. Paul was pertinacious in raising objections, but I told him peremptorily there was no escape; that he must buy a cow or a camel, if necessary, and left him scratching his head and pondering over the task before him.

In the hurried business of the day, I had entirely forgotten Paul and his perplexities. Once only, I remember, with a commendable prudence, I tried to get my companions to expend some of their force upon dried dates and Nubian bread, which they as maliciously declined, that they might do justice to me. Returning now, at the end of nine hours' hard work, crossing rivers and rambling among ruins, the sharp exercise, and the grating of my teeth at the stubborn movements of my donkey, gave me an extraordinary voracity, and dinner, the all-important, never-to-be-forgotten business of the day, the delight alike of the ploughman and philosopher, dinner, with its uncertain goodness, began to press upon the most tender sensibilities of my nature. My companions felt the vibrations of the same chord, and with an unnecessary degree of circumstance, talked of the effect of air and exercise in sharpening the appetite, and the glorious satisfaction after a day's work of sitting down to a good dinner. I had perfect confidence in Paul's zeal and ability, but I began to have

some misgivings. I felt a hungry devil within me, that roared as if he would never be satisfied. I looked at my companions, and heard them talk, and as I followed their humour with an hysteric laugh, I thought the genius of famine was at my heels, in the shape of two hungry Englishmen. I trembled for Paul, but the first glimpse I caught of him reassured me. He sat with his arms folded, on the deck of the boat, coolly, though with an air of conscious importance, looking out for us. Slowly and with dignity he came to assist us from our accursed asses; neither a smile nor frown was on his face, but there reigned an expression that you could not mistake. Reader, you have seen the countenance of a good man lighted up with the consciousness of having done a good action; even so was Paul's. I could read in his face a consciousness of having acted well his part. One might almost have dined on it. It said as plainly as face could speak, one, two, three, four, five courses and a dessert, or, as they say at the two-franc restaurants in Paris, Quatre plats, une demi bouteille de vin, et pain à discrétion.

In fact, the worthy butler of Ravenswood could not have stood in the hall of his master in the days of its glory, before thunder broke china and soured buttermilk, with more sober and conscious dignity than did Paul stand on the deck of my boat to receive us. A load was removed from my heart. I knew that my credit was saved, and I led the way with a proud step to my little cabin. Still I asked

no questions and made no apologies. I simply told my companions we were in Paul's hands, and he would do with us as seemed to him good. Another board had been added to my table, and my towel had been washed and dried during the day, and now lay, clean and of a rather reddish white, doing the duty of a table-cloth. I noticed two tumblers, knives and forks, and plates, which were strangers to me, but I said nothing; we seated ourselves and waited, nor did we wait long; soon we saw Paul coming towards us, staggering under the weight of his burden, the savoury odour of which preceded him. He entered and laid before us an Irish stew. Reader, did you ever eat an Irish stew? Gracious Heaven! I shall never forget that paragon of dishes; how often in the desert, among the mountains of Sinai, in the Holy Land, rambling along the valley of Jehoshaphat, or on the shores of the Dead Sea, how often has that Irish stew risen before me to tease and tantalize me, and haunt me with the memory of departed joys! The potato is a vegetable that does not grow in Egypt. I had not tasted one for more than a month, and was almost startled out of my propriety at seeing them; but I held my peace, and was as solemn and dignified as Paul himself. Without much ceremony we threw ourselves with one accord upon the stew. I think I only do our party justice, when I say that few of those famished gentlemen from whose emerald isle it takes its name, could have shown more affection for the national

dish. For my own part, as I did not know what was coming next, if any thing, I felt loath to part with it. My companions were knowing ones, and seemed to be of the same way of thinking, and without any consultation all appeared to be approaching the same end, to wit, the end of the stew. With the empty dish before him, demonstrative to Paul that so far we were perfectly satisfied with what he had done, that worthy purveyor came forward with an increase of dignity, to change our plates. I now saw that something more was coming. I had suspected from the beginning that Paul was in the mutton line, and involuntarily murmured, "this day a sheep has died;" and presently on came another cut of the murdered innocent, in cutlets, accompanied by fried potatoes. Then came boiled mutton and boiled potatoes, and then roast mutton and roast potatoes, and then came a macaroni paté. I thought this was going to damn the whole; until this I had considered the dinner as something extraordinary and recherché. But the macaroni, the thing of at least six days in the week, utterly disconcerted me. I tried to give Paul a wink to keep it back, but on he came; if he had followed with a chicken, I verily believe I should have thrown it at his head. But my friends were unflinching and uncompromising. They were determined to stand by Paul to the last, and we laid in the macaroni paté, with as much vigour as if we had not already eaten a sheep. Paul wound us up and packed

us down with pancakes. I never knew a man that did not like pancakes, or who could not eat them even at the tail of a mighty dinner. And now, feeling that happy sensation of fulness which puts a man above kings, princes, or pachas, we lighted our long pipes and smoked. Our stomachs were full and our hearts were open. Talk of mutual sympathy, of congenial spirits, of similarity of tastes, and all that. 'Tis the dinner which unlocks the heart; you feel yourself warming towards the man that has dined with you. The parts of the several animals which you have forcibly separated seem drawing together and carrying you with them. It was in this happy spirit that we lay like warriors, resting on our arms, and talked over the particulars of our battle.

And now, all dignity put aside and all restraint removed, and thinking my friends might have recognised acquaintances among the things at the table which were strangers to me, and thinking, too, that I stood on a pinnacle, and come what might I could not fall, I led the way in speculating upon the manner in which Paul had served us. The ice once broken, my friends solved many of the mysteries, by claiming this, that, and the other as part of their furniture and stores. In fact, they were going on most unscrupulously, making it somewhat doubtful whether I had furnished any thing for my own dinner, and I called in Paul. But that functionary had no desire to be questioned; he hemmed, and hawed, and dodged about; but I

told him to make a clean heart of it, and then it came out, but it was like drawing teeth, that he had been on a regular foraging expedition among their stores. The potatoes with which he had made such a flourish were part of a very small stock furnished them by a friend, as a luxury not to be had on the Nile; and instead of the acknowledgments which I expected to receive on account of my dinner, my friends congratulated me rather ironically upon possessing such a treasure of a steward. We sat together till a late hour; were grave, gay, laughing, and lachrymose by turns; and when we began to doze over our pipes, betook ourselves to slumber.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ascent of the Cataracts.—A nautical Patriarch.—Political Improvement.—A Nubian Damsel's Wardrobe.—A test of Friendship.—East and West.—Moonlight on the Nile.—Uses of a Temple.

In the morning we were up betimes, expecting another stirring day in mounting the Cataracts. Carrying boats up and down these rapids is the great business of the Nubians, who live on the borders of Egypt. It is a business that requires great knowledge and address; and the rais who commands the large squad of men necessary to mount a boat, is an important person among them. He was already there with part of his men, the others being stationed among the islands of the Cataracts, at the places where their services would be needed. This rais was one of the most noble-looking men I ever saw. He was more than eighty, a native of Barbary, who had in early life wandered with a caravan across the Libyan desert, and been left, he knew not why, on a little island among the Cataracts of the Nile. As the Nubian does now, firmly seated on a log and paddling with his hands, he had floated in every eddy, and marked every stone that the falling river lays bare to the eye; and now, with the experience of years, he stood among the Nubians, confessedly one of

their most skilful pilots, through a difficult and sometimes dangerous navigation. He was tall and thin, with a beard of uncommon length and whiteness, a face dried, scarred, and wrinkled, and dark as it could be without having the blackness of a negro. His costume was a clean white turban, red jacket, and red sash, with white trousers, red slippers, and a heavy club fastened by a string around his wrist. I am particular in describing the appearance of the hardy old man, for we were exceedingly struck with it. Nothing could be finer than his look, his walk, his every movement; and the picturesque effect was admirably heightened by contrast with his swarthy assistants, most of whom were desperately ragged, and many of them as naked as they were born. The old man came on board with a dignity that savoured more of a youth passed amid the polish of a European court, than on the sands of Barbary, or the rude islands of the Nile. We received him as if he had been the great pacha himself, gave him coffee and pipes, and left him to the greatest luxury of the East, perfect rest, until his services should be required.

In the mean time, with a strong and favourable wind, we started from the little harbour of Assouan, while a throng of idlers, gathered together on the beach, watched our departure with as much interest as though it were not an event of almost daily occurrence. Almost immediately above Assouan the view extends over a broad surface, and the

rocks and islands begin to multiply. The strong wind enabled us to ascend some distance with the sails; but our progress gradually diminished, and at length, while our sails were yet filled almost to bursting, we came to a dead stand, struggled vainly for a while against the increasing current, and then fell astern. The old rais, who had sat quietly watching the movements of the boat, now roused himself; and, at his command, a naked Nubian, with a rope over his shoulders, plunged into the river and swam for the shore. At first he swam boldly and vigorously; but soon his strength began to fail, and the weight of the slackened rope effectually stopped his progress; when, resting for a little space, he dived like a duck, kicking his heels in the air, came up clear of the rope, and soon gained the bank. A dozen Nubians now threw themselves into the water, caught the sinking rope, carried it ashore and wound it round a rock. Again the rais spoke, and fifty swarthy bodies were splashing in the water, and in a moment more they were on the rocky bank, hauling upon the rope; others joined them, but where they came from nobody could see; and by the strength of a hundred men, all pulling and shouting together, and both sails full, we passed the first Cataract.

Above this the passage became more difficult, and the old rais seemed to rise in spirit and energy with the emergency. As we approached the second Cataract half a dozen ropes were thrown

out, and the men seemed to multiply as if by magic, springing up among the rocks like a parcel of black river-gods. More than two hundred of them were hauling on the ropes at once, climbing over the rocks, descending into the river, and again mounting, with their naked bodies shining in the sun, all talking, tugging, ordering, and shouting together; and among them, high above the rest, was heard the clear voice of the rais; his noble figure, too, was seen, now scrambling along the base of a rock, now standing on its summit, his long arms thrown above his head, his white beard and ample dress streaming in the wind, until the inert mass had triumphed over the rushing river; when he again took his seat upon the deck, and in the luxury of his pipe forgot the animating scene that for a moment had cheated him back to youth.

At this season, there was in no place a fall of more than two feet; though the river, breaking among the almost innumerable rocks and islands, hurried along with great violence and rapidity. In the midst of the most furious rushing of the waters, adding much to the striking wildness of the scene, were two figures, with their clothes tied above their heads, sitting upon the surface of the water apparently, and floating as if by a miracle. They were a man and his wife, crossing from one of the islands; their bark a log, with a bundle of cornstalks on each side; too frail to support their weight, yet strong enough to keep them from sinking.

And now all was over; we had passed the Cataracts, catching our dinner at intervals as we came up. We had wound round the beautiful Island of Philœ, and the boat had hauled up alongside the bank to let me go ashore. The moment of parting and returning to my former loneliness had come, and I felt my courage failing. I verily believe that if my own boat had been above the Cataracts, I should have given up my own project and accompanied my English friends. Paul was even more reluctant to part than his master. He had never travelled except with a party, where the other servants and dragomen were company for him, and after one of these chance encounters, he was for a while completely prostrated. The moment of parting came and passed; adieus were kindly said, and with Paul and my own rais for company, I set out on foot for Assouan.

Directly opposite the Island of Philœ is a stopping-place for boats, where dates, the great produce of Upper Egypt, are brought in large quantities, and deposited preparatory to being sent down to Cairo. All along the upper part of the Nile the palm-tree had become more plentiful, and here it was the principal and almost only product of the country. Its value is inestimable to the Nubians, as well as to the Arabs of Upper Egypt; and so well is this value known, and so general is the progress of the country in European improvements, that every tree pays an annual tax to the great reformer.

The Nubian is interesting in his appearance and character; his figure is tall, thin, sinewy, and

graceful, possessing what would be called in civilized life an uncommon degree of gentility; his face is rather dark, though far removed from African blackness; his features are long and aquiline, decidedly resembling the Roman; the expression of his face mild, amiable, and approaching to melancholy. I remember to have thought, when reading Sir Walter Scott's Crusaders, that the metamorphosis of Kenneth into a Nubian was strained and improbable, as I did not then understand the shades of difference in the features and complexion of the inhabitants of Africa; but observation has shown me that it was my own ignorance that deceived me; and in this, as in other descriptions of Eastern scenes, I have been forced to admire the great and intimate knowledge of details possessed by the unequalled novelist, and his truth and liveliness of description.

The inhabitants of Nubia, like all who come under the rod of the pacha, suffer the accumulated ills of poverty. Happily, they live in a country where their wants are few; the sun warms them, and the palm-tree feeds and clothes them. The use of firearms is almost unknown, and their weapons are still the spear and shield, as in ages long past. In the upper part of Nubia the men and women go entirely naked, except a piece of leather about six inches wide, cut in strings, and tied about their loins; and even here, on the confines of Egypt, at least one half of the Nubians appear in the same costume.

I do not know what has made me introduce these

remarks upon the character and manners of the Nubians here, except it be to pave the way for the incidents of my walk down to Assouan. Wishing to get rid of my unpleasant feelings at parting with my companions, I began to bargain for one of the large heavy clubs, made of the palm-tree, which every Nubian carries, and bought what a Kentuckian would call a screamer, or an Irishman a toothpick—a large round club, about two inches in diameter—which seldom left my hand till I lost it in the Holy Land. Then seeing a Nubian riding backward and forward on a dromedary, showing his paces like a jockey at a horse-market, I began to bargain for him. I mounted him (the first time I had mounted a dromedary), and as I expected to have considerable use for him, and liked his paces, I was on the point of buying him, but was prevented by the sudden reflection that I had no means of getting him down to Cairo. My next essay was upon more delicate ground. I began to bargain for the costume of a Nubian lady, and, to use an expressive phrase, though in this case not literally true, I bought it off her back. One of my friends in Italy had been very particular in making a collection of ladies' costumes, and to a man curious in those things, it struck me that nothing could be more curious than this. One of the elements of beauty is said to be simplicity; and if this be not a mere poetical fiction, and beauty when unadorned is really adorned the most, then was the young Nubian girl, whose dress I bought, adorned in very perfection. In fact, it was impossible to be more

simple, without going back to the origin of all dress, the simple fig-leaf. She was not more than sixteen, with a sweet mild face, and a figure that the finest lady might be proud to exhibit in its native beauty: every limb charmingly rounded, and every muscle finely developed. It would have been a burning shame to put such a figure into frock, petticoat, and the other etceteras of a lady's dress. I now look back upon this, and many other scenes, as strange, of which I thought nothing at the time, when all around was in conformity. I remember, however, though I thought nothing of seeing women all but naked, that at first I did feel somewhat delicate in attempting to buy the few inches that constituted the young girl's wardrobe. Paul had no such scruples, and I found, too, that, as in the road to vice, "ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte." In short, I bought it, and have it with me, and to the curious in such matters I have no hesitation in saying, that the costume of a Nubian lady is far more curious than any thing to be found in Italy, and would make a decided sensation at a masquerade or fancy ball.

It was nearly dark, when, from the ruined height of the old city of Assouan, I saw my little boat with the flag of my country, and near it, hardly less welcome to my eyes, the red-cross banner of England. The sight of these objects, assisted by my multifarious bargainings, relieved me from the loneliness I had felt in parting from my friends; and I went on board the English boat, hoping to find a party with which I had partially arranged

to set out from Cairo, and which I was every day expecting. I was disappointed, however; but found a gentleman to whom I was then a stranger, the English consul at Alexandria. He had been eighteen years in the country, closely devoted to his public and private duties, without ever having been in Upper Egypt. On the point of returning home, to enjoy in his own country and among his own people the fruits of his honourable labours, he had now for the first time ascended the Nile. He was accompanied by his daughter, who had reigned as a belle and beauty in the ancient city of Cleopatra, and her newly-married husband. Coming from home, their boat was furnished and fitted up with all kinds of luxuries. Their tea-table, in particular, made such a strong impression on me, that when I met them again at Thebes, I happened to find myself on board their boat regularly about the time for the evening meal. I was exceedingly pleased with Mr. T——; so much so, that at Thebes I gave him the strongest mark of it a man could give—I borrowed money of him; and I have reason to remember his kindness in relieving me from a situation which might have embarrassed me.

Early the next morning the sails were already loosed and the stake pulled up, when Paul, from the bank, cried out, "A sail!" and, looking down the river, I saw a boat coming up, and again the English flag. I furled my sails, fastened the stake, and waited till she came up, and found the party I had expected. I went on board and breakfasted

with them. They had started from Cairo on the same day with me; but with their large boats could not keep up with me against the wind. They had heard of me along the river; and, among other things, had heard of my having shot a crocodile. Waiting to see them off for the Island of Philœ, and bidding them good-by until we should meet at Thebes, I returned to my boat, and, letting fall the sails, before they were out of sight was descending the Nile.

My face was now turned towards home. Thousands of miles, it is true, were between us; but I was on the bosom of a mighty river, which was carrying me to the mightier ocean, and the waves that were rolling by my side were rapidly hurrying on, and might one day wash the shores of my native land. It was a beautiful prospect I had before me now. I could lie on the deck of my boat, and float hundreds of miles, shooting at crocodiles, or I could go ashore and ramble among modern villages, and the ruins of ancient cities, and all the time, I thought, I would be advancing on my journey. Before night, however, the wind was blowing dead ahead, and we were obliged to furl our sails and take to our oars. But it was all of no use; our boat was blown about like a feather; carried around, backward and forward, across the river, zigzag, and at last fairly driven up the stream. With great difficulty, we worked down to Ombos; and here, under the ruins of an ancient temple, part of which had already fallen into the river, we hauled up to the bank, and, in

company with half a dozen Arab boats, lay by till morning.

Man is a gregarious animal. My boatmen always liked to stop where they saw other boats. I remember it was the same on the Ohio and Mississippi. Several years since, when the water was low, I started from Pittsburgh in a flat-bottomed boat, to float down to New-Orleans. There, too, we were in the habit of stopping along the bank at night, or in windy or foggy weather, and the scenes and circumstances were so different that the contrast was most interesting and impressive. Here we moored under the ruins of an ancient temple, there we made fast to the wild trees of an untrodden forest; here we joined half a dozen boats with eight or ten men in each, and they all gathered round a fire, sipped coffee, smoked, and lay down quietly to sleep; there we met the dashing, roaring boys of the West, ripe for fun, frolic, or fight. The race of men "half horse, half alligator, and t'other half steamboat," had not yet passed away, and whenever two boats met, these restless rovers must "do something"—play cards, pitch pennies, fight cocks, set fire to a house, or have a row of some description. Indeed, it always involved a long train of interesting reflections, to compare the stillness and quiet of a journey on this oldest of rivers, with the moving castles and the splashing of paddle-wheels on the great rivers of the New World.

At daylight I had mounted the bank, and was groping among the ruins of the temple. The por-

tico fronting the river is a noble ruin, nearly a hundred feet in length, with three rows of columns, five in each row, thirty feet high, and ten feet in diameter at the base. The principal figure on the walls is Osiris, with a crocodile head, and the sacred tau in his hand. The Ombites were distinguished for their worship of the crocodile, and this noble temple was dedicated to that bestial god: among the ruins are still to be seen the wall on which the sacred animal was led in religious procession, and the tank in which he was bathed.

Towards noon we were approaching Hadjar Silsily, or the Rock of the Chain, the narrowest part of the river, produced on each side by ranges of sandstone mountains. On the eastern side are ancient quarries of great extent, with the same appearance of freshness as at Assouan. Nothing is known of the history of these quarries; but they seem to have furnished material enough for all the cities on the Nile, as well as the temples and monuments that adorned them. Whole mountains have been cut away; and while the solitary traveller walks among these deserted workshops, and looks at the smooth sides of the mountains, and the fragments of unfinished work around him, he feels a respect for the people who have passed away, greater than when standing among the ruins of their mighty temples; for here he has only the evidences of their gigantic industry, without being reminded of the gross and disgusting purposes to which that industry was prostituted. The roads worn in the stone by the ancient carriage-wheels

are still to be seen, and somewhere among these extensive quarries travellers have found an unfinished sphinx. I remember one place where there was an irregular range of unfinished doors, which might well have been taken for the work of beginners, practising under the eyes of their masters. Paul took a philosophic and familiar view of them, and said that it seemed as if, while the men were at work, the boys playing around had taken up the tools, and amused themselves by cutting these doors.

On the opposite side, too, are quarries, and several ranges of tombs, looking out on the river, excavated in the solid rock, with pillars in front, and images of deities in the recesses for the altars. I remember a beautiful chamber overhanging the river like a balcony. It had been part of a temple, or perhaps a tomb. We thought of stopping there to dine, but our boat had gone ahead, and our want of provisions was somewhat of an impediment.

At about four o'clock we saw at a distance the minaret of Edfou. There was no wind, the men were gently pulling at the oars, and I took one myself, much to the uneasiness of the rais, who thought I was dissatisfied. Sloth forms so prominent a feature in the composition of the Orientals, and quiet is so material an item in their ideas of enjoyment, that they cannot conceive why a man should walk when he can stand, why he should stand when he can sit, or, in short, why he should do any thing when he can sit still and do nothing.

It was dark before we arrived at Edfou. I mean it was that period of time, when, by Nature's laws, it should be dark; that is, the day had ended, the sun had set with that rich and burning lustre which attends his departing glories nowhere but in Egypt, and the moon was shedding her pale light over the valley of the Nile. But it was a moon that lighted up all nature with a paler, purer, and more lovely light; a moon that would have told secrets—a moon—a moon—in short, a moon whose light enabled one to walk over fields without stumbling, and this was, at the moment, the principal consideration with me.

Edfou lies about a mile from the bank of the river, and taking Paul and one of the Arabs with me, I set off to view the temple by moonlight. The town, as usual, contained mud houses, many of them in ruins, a mosque, a bath, bazars, the usual apology for a palace, and more than the usual quantity of ferocious dogs; and at one corner of this miserable place stands one of the magnificent temples of the Nile. The propylon, its lofty proportions enlarged by the light of the moon, was the most grand and imposing portal I saw in Egypt. From a base of nearly one hundred feet in length, and thirty in breadth, it rises on each side the gate, in the form of a truncated pyramid, to the height of a hundred feet, gradually narrowing, till at the top it measures seventy-five feet in length and eighteen in breadth. Judge, then, what was the temple to which this formed merely the entrance; and this was far from being one of the

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PROPYLON—TEMPLE AT EDFOU.

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large temples of Egypt. It measured, however, 440 feet in length and 220 in breadth, about equal to the whole space occupied by St. Paul's churchyard. Its dromos, pronaos, columns, and capitals all correspond, and enclosing it is a high wall, still in a state of perfect preservation. I walked round it twice, and by means of the wall erected to exclude the unhallowed gaze of the stranger, I looked down upon the interior of the temple. Built by the Egyptians for the highest uses to which a building could be dedicated, for the worship of their gods, it is now used by the pacha as a granary and store-house. The portico and courtyard, and probably the interior chambers, were filled with grain. A guard was stationed to secure it against the pilfering Arabs; and, to secure the fidelity of the guard himself, he was locked in at sunset, and the key left with the governor. The lofty entrance was closed by a wooden door; the vigilant guard was already asleep, and we were obliged to knock some time before we could wake him.

It was a novel and extraordinary scene, our parley with the guard at the door of the temple. We were standing under the great propylon, mere insects at the base of the lofty towers; behind us at a little distance sat a group of the miserable villagers, and leaning against a column in the porch of the temple was the indistinct figure of the guard, motionless, and answering in a low deep tone, like an ancient priest delivering the answers of the oracles. By the mellow light of the moon every

thing seemed magnified; the majestic proportions of the temple appeared more majestic, and the miserable huts around it still more miserable, and the past glory and the present ruin of this once most favoured land, rushed upon me with a force I had not felt even at the foot of the pyramids. If the temple of that little, unknown city now stood in Hyde Park, or the garden of the Tuileries, France, England, all Europe would gaze upon it with wonder and admiration; and when thousands of years shall have rolled away, and they too shall have fallen, there will be no monument in those proudest of modern cities, like this in the little town of Edfou, to raise its majestic head and tell the passing traveller the story of their former greatness.

Some of the Arabs proposed to conduct me to the interior, through a passage opening from the ruined huts on the top; but after searching a while, the miserable village could not produce a candle, torch, or taper, to light the way. But I did not care much about it. I did not care to disturb the strong impressions and general effect of that moonlight scene; and though in this, as in other things, I subject myself to the imputation of having been but a superficial observer, I would not exchange the lively recollection of that night for the most accurate knowledge of every particular stone in the whole temple.

I returned to my boat, and, to the surprise of my rais, ordered him to pull up stake and drop down the river. I intended to drop down about two hours to Elythias, or in Arabic Elkob. No one

on board knew where it was, and, tempted by the mildness and beauty of the night, I stayed on deck till a late hour. Several times we saw fires on the banks, where Arab boatmen were passing the night, and hailed them, but no one knew the place; and though seeking and inquiring of those who had spent all their lives on the banks of the river, we passed, without knowing it, a city which once carried on an extensive commerce with the Red Sea, where the traces of a road to the emerald mines and the fallen city of Berenice are still to be seen, and the ruins of whose temples, with the beautiful paintings in its tombs, excite the admiration of every traveller.

We continued descending with the current all night, and in the morning I betook myself to my old sport of shooting at crocodiles and pelicans. At about eleven o'clock we arrived at Esneh, the ancient Latopolis, so called from the worship of a fish, now containing fifteen hundred or two thousand inhabitants. Here, too, the miserable subjects of the pacha may turn from the contemplation of their degraded state to the greatness of those who have gone before them. In the centre of the village, almost buried by the accumulation of sand from the desert, and the ruins of Arab huts, is another magnificent temple. The street is upon a level with the roof, and a hole has been dug between two columns, so as to give entrance to the interior. The traveller has by this time lost the feeling of wonder and indignation at the barbarity of converting the wonderful remains of Egyptian

skill and labour to the meanest uses; and descending between the excavated columns, finds himself, without surprise or sorrow, in a large cleared space, filled with grain, earthen jars, and Arabs. The gigantic columns, with their lotus-leaved capitals, are familiar things; but among the devices on the ceiling, his wandering eye is fixed by certain mysterious characters which have been called the signs of the zodiac, and from which speculators in science have calculated that the temple was built more than six thousand years ago, before the time assigned by the Mosaic account as the beginning of the world.

But this little town contains objects of more interest than the ruins of a heathen temple; for here, among the bigoted followers of Mohammed, dwell fifty or sixty Christian families; being the last in Egypt, and standing on the very outposts of the Christian world. They exhibited, however, a melancholy picture of the religion they profess. The priest was a swarthy, scowling Arab, and, as Paul said, looked more like a robber than a pastor. He followed us for bucksheesh, and, attended by a crowd of boys, we went to the house of the bishop. This bishop, as he is styled by courtesy, is a miserable-looking old man; he told us he had charge of the two churches at Esneh, and of all the Christians in the world beyond it to the *south*. His flock consists of about two hundred, poor wanderers from the true principles of Christianity, and knowing it only as teaching them to make the sign of the cross, and to call upon the Son, and Virgin,

and a long calendar of saints. Outside the door of the church was a school; a parcel of dirty boys sitting on the ground, under the shade of some palm-trees, with a more dirty blind man for their master, who seemed to be at the work of teaching because he was not fit for any thing else. I turned away with a feeling of melancholy, and almost blushed in the presence of the haughty Mussulmans, to recognise the ignorant and degraded objects around me as my Christian brethren.

CHAPTER IX.

Thebes, its Temples and great Ruins.—The Obelisk of Luxor, now of Paris.—An Avenue of Sphinxes.—Carnac.—The Mummy-pits.—The Tombs of the Kings.—The Memnonium.

It was nearly noon, when, with a gentle breeze, we dropped into the harbour of Thebes. The sun was beating upon it with meridian splendour; the inhabitants were seeking shelter in their miserable huts from its scorching rays, and when we made fast near the remains of the ancient port, to which, more than thirty centuries ago, the Egyptian boatman tied his boat, a small group of Arabs smoking under the shade of some palm-trees, on a point above, and two or three stragglers who came down to the bank to gaze at us, were the only living beings we beheld in a city which had numbered its millions. When Greece was just emerging from the shades of barbarism, and before the name of Rome was known, Egypt was far advanced in science and the arts, and Thebes the most magnificent city in the world. But the Assyrian came and overthrew for ever the throne of the Pharaohs. The Persian war-cry rang through the crowded streets of Thebes, Cambyses laid his destroying hands upon the temples of its gods, and a greater than Babylon the Great fell to rise no more.

The ancient city was twenty-three miles in circumference. The valley of the Nile was not large enough to contain it, and its extremities rested upon the bases of the mountains of Arabia and Africa. The whole of this great extent is more or less strewed with ruins, broken columns, and avenues of sphinxes, colossal figures, obelisks, pyramidal gateways, porticoes, blocks of polished granite, and stones of extraordinary magnitude, while above them, "in all the nakedness of desolation," the colossal skeletons of giant temples are standing "in the unwatered sands, in solitude and silence. They are neither gray, nor blackened; there is no lichen, no moss, no rank grass or mantling ivy, to robe them and conceal their deformities. Like the bones of man, they seem to whiten under the sun of the desert." The sand of Africa has been their most fearful enemy; blown upon them for more than three thousand years, it has buried the largest monuments, and, in some instances, almost entire temples.

At this day the temples of Thebes are known almost everywhere, by the glowing reports of travellers. Artists have taken drawings of all their minute details, and I shall refer to them very briefly. On the Arabian side of the Nile are the great temples of Luxor and Carnac. The temple of Luxor stands near the bank of the river, built there, as is supposed, for the convenience of the Egyptian boatmen. Before the magnificent gateway of this temple, until within a few years, stood two lofty obelisks, each a single block of red gran-

ite more than eighty feet high, covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics fresh as if but yesterday from the hands of the sculptor. One of them has been lately taken down by the French, and at this moment rears its daring summit to the skies in the centre of admiring Paris; the other is yet standing on the spot where it was first erected.

Between these and the grand propylon are two colossal statues with mitred head-dresses, also single blocks of granite, buried to the chest by sand, but still rising more than twenty feet above the ground. The grand propylon is a magnificent gateway, more than 200 feet in length at its present base, and more than sixty feet above the sand. The whole front is covered with sculpture; the battle-scenes of an Egyptian warrior, designed and executed with extraordinary force and spirit. In one compartment the hero is represented advancing at the head of his forces, and breaking through the ranks of the enemy; then standing, a colossal figure, in a car drawn by two fiery horses, with feathers waving over their heads, the reins tied round his body, his bow bent, the arrow drawn to its head, and the dead and wounded lying under the wheels of his car and the hoofs of his horses. In another place several cars are seen in full speed for the walls of a town, fugitives passing a river, horses, chariots, and men struggling to reach the opposite bank, while the hero, hurried impetuously beyond the rank of his own followers, is standing alone among the slain and wounded who have fallen under his formida-

ble arm. At the farthest extremity he is sitting on a throne as a conqueror, with a sceptre in his hand, a row of the principal captives before him, each with a rope around his neck; one with outstretched hands imploring pity, and another on his knees to receive the blow of the executioner, while above is the vanquished monarch, with his hands tied to a car, about to grace the triumph of the conqueror.

Passing this magnificent entrance, the visiter enters the dromos, or large open court, surrounded by a ruined portico formed by a double row of columns covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics; and working his way over heaps of rubbish and Arab huts, among stately columns twelve feet in diameter, and between thirty and forty feet in height, with spreading capitals resembling the budding lotus, some broken, some prostrate, some half buried, and some lofty and towering as when they were erected, at the distance of 600 feet reaches the sanctuary of the temple.

But great and magnificent as was the temple of Luxor, it served but as a portal to the greater Carnac. Standing nearly two miles from Luxor, the whole road to it was lined with rows of sphinxes, each of a solid block of granite. At this end they are broken, and, for the most part, buried under the sand and heaps of rubbish. But, approaching Carnac, they stand entire, still and solemn as when the ancient Egyptian passed between them to worship in the great temple of Ammon. Four grand propylons terminate this ave-

nue of sphinxes, and passing through the last, the scene which presents itself defies description. Belzoni remarks of the ruins of Thebes generally, that he felt as if he was in a city of giants; and no man can look upon the splendid ruins of Carnac, without feeling humbled by the greatness of a people who have passed away for ever. The western entrance, facing the temple of Northern Dair on the opposite side of the river, also approached between two rows of sphinxes, is a magnificent propylon 400 feet long, and forty feet in thickness. In the language of Dr. Richardson, "looking forward from the centre of this gateway, the vast scene of havoc and destruction presents itself in all the extent of this immense temple, with its columns, and walls, and immense propylons, all prostrate in one heap of ruins, looking as if the thunders of heaven had smitten it at the command of an insulted God."

The field of ruins is about a mile in diameter; the temple itself twelve hundred feet long and four hundred and twenty broad. It has twelve principal entrances, each of which is approached through rows of sphinxes, as across the plain from Luxor, and each is composed of propylons, gateways, and other buildings, in themselves larger than most other temples; the sides of some of them are equal to the bases of most of the pyramids, and on each side of many are colossal statues, some sitting, others erect, from twenty to thirty feet in height. In front of the body of the temple is a large court, with an immense colonnade on each side, of thirty

columns in length, and through the middle two rows of columns fifty feet in height; then an immense portico, the roof supported by 134 columns, from twenty-six to thirty-four feet in circumference. Next were four beautiful obelisks more than seventy feet high, three of which are still standing; and then the sanctuary, consisting of an apartment about twenty feet square, the walls and ceiling of large blocks of highly-polished granite, the ceiling studded with stars on a blue ground, and the walls covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics representing offerings to Osiris, illustrating the mysterious uses of this sacred chamber, and showing the degrading character of the Egyptian worship. Beyond this is another colonnade, and again porticoes and walls to another propylon, at a distance of two thousand feet from the western extremity of the temple.

But these are not half of the ruins of Thebes. On the western side of the river, besides others prostrate and nearly buried under the sands, but the traces of which are still visible, the temples of Gornou, Northern Dair, Dair-el-Medinet, the Memnonium, and Medinet Abou, with their columns, and sculpture, and colossal figures, still raise their giant skeletons above the sands. Volumes have been written upon them, and volumes may yet be written, and he that reads all will still have but an imperfect idea of the ruins of Thebes. I will only add, that all these temples were connected by long avenues of sphinxes, statues, propylons, and colossal figures, and the reader's imagination will work

out the imposing scene that was presented in the crowded streets of the now desolate city, when, with all the gorgeous ceremonies of pagan idolatry, the priests, bearing the sacred image of their god, and followed by thousands of the citizens, made their annual procession from temple to temple, and, "with harps, and cymbals, and songs of rejoicing," brought back their idol and replaced him in his shrine in the grand temple at Carnac.

The rambler among the ruins of Thebes will often ask himself, "Where are the palaces of the kings, and princes, and people who worshipped in these mighty temples?" With the devout though degraded spirit of religion that possessed the Egyptians, they seem to have paid but little regard to their earthly habitations; their temples and their tombs were the principal objects that engrossed the thoughts of this extraordinary people. It has been well said of them that they regarded the habitations of the living merely as temporary resting-places, while the tombs were regarded as permanent and eternal mansions; and while not a vestige of a habitation is to be seen, the tombs remain, monuments of splendour and magnificence, perhaps even more wonderful than the ruins of their temples. Clinging to the cherished doctrine of the metempsychosis, the immortal part, on quitting its earthly tenement, was supposed to become a wandering, migratory spirit, giving life and vitality to some bird of the air, some beast of the field, or some fish of the sea, waiting for a regeneration in the natural body. And it was of the very essence

of this faith to inculcate a pious regard for the security and preservation of the dead. The whole mountain-side on the western bank of the river is one vast Necropolis. The open doors of tombs are seen in long ranges and at different elevations, and on the plain large pits have been opened, in which have been found a thousand mummies at a time. For many years, and until a late order of the pacha preventing it, the Arabs have been in the habit of rifling the tombs to sell the mummies to travellers. Thousands have been torn from the places where pious hands had laid them, and the bones meet the traveller at every step. The Arabs use the mummy-cases for firewood, the bituminous matters used in the embalment being well adapted to ignition; and the epicurean traveller may cook his breakfast with the coffin of a king. Notwithstanding the depredations that have been committed, the mummies that have been taken away and scattered all over the world, those that have been burnt, and others that now remain in fragments around the tombs, the numbers yet undisturbed are no doubt infinitely greater; for the practice of embalming is known to have existed from the earliest periods recorded in the history of Egypt; and, by a rough computation, founded upon the age, the population of the city, and the average duration of human life, it is supposed that there are from eight to ten millions of mummied bodies in the vast Necropolis of Thebes.

Leaving these resting-places of the dead, I turn for one moment to those of more than royal mag-

nificence, called the tombs of the kings. The world can show nothing like them; and he who has not seen them can hardly believe in their existence. They lie in the valley of Biban-el-Melook, a dark and gloomy opening in the sand-stone mountains, about three quarters of an hour from Gornou. The road to them is over a dreary waste of sands, and their doors open from the most desolate spot that the imagination can conceive. Diodorus Siculus says, that forty-seven of these tombs were entered on the sacred registers of the Egyptian priests, only seventeen of which remained at the time of his visit to Egypt, about sixty years B. C. In our own days, the industry and enterprise of a single individual, the indefatigable Belzoni, have brought to light one that was probably entirely unknown in the time of the Grecian traveller. The entrance is by a narrow door; a simple excavation in the side of the mountain, without device or ornament. That discovered by Belzoni is three hundred and nine feet long, and contains fourteen chambers of different sizes. The entrance-hall, which is extremely beautiful, is twenty-seven feet long and twenty-five broad, having at the end a large door opening into another chamber, twenty-eight feet by twenty-five, the walls covered with figures drawn in outline, but perfect as if recently done. Descending a large staircase and passing through a beautiful corridor, Belzoni came to another staircase, at the foot of which he entered another apartment, twenty-four feet by thirteen, and so ornamented with sculpture and paintings,

that he called it the Hall of Beauty. The sides of all the chambers and corridors are covered with sculpture and paintings; the colours appearing fresher as the visiter advances towards the interior of the tomb; and the walls of this chamber are covered with the figures of Egyptian gods and goddesses, seeming to hover round and guard the remains of the honoured dead.

Farther on is a large hall, twenty-eight feet long and twenty-seven broad, supported by two rows of square pillars, which Belzoni called the Hall of Pillars; and beyond this is the entry to a large saloon with a vaulted roof, thirty-two feet in length and twenty-seven in breadth. Opening from this were several other chambers of different dimensions, one of them unfinished, and one forty-three feet long by seventeen feet six inches wide, in which he found the mummy of a bull; but in the centre of the grand saloon was a sarcophagus of the finest oriental alabaster, only two inches thick, minutely sculptured within and without with several hundred figures, and perfectly transparent when a light was placed within it.

All over the corridors and chambers the walls are adorned with sculptures and paintings in intaglio and relief, representing gods, goddesses, and the hero of the tomb in the most prominent events of his life, priests, religious processions and sacrifices, boats and agricultural scenes, and the most familiar pictures of every-day life, in colours as fresh as if they were painted not more than a month ago; and the large saloon, lighted up with

the blaze of our torches, seemed more fitted for a banqueting-hall for song and dance, than a burial-place of the dead. All travellers concur in pronouncing the sudden transition from the dreary desert without to these magnificent tombs, as operating like a scene of enchantment; and we may imagine what must have been the sensations of Belzoni, when, wandering with the excitement of a first discoverer through these beautiful corridors and chambers, he found himself in the great saloon, leaning over the alabaster sarcophagus. An old Arab who accompanied us remembered Belzoni, and pointed out a chamber where the fortunate explorer entertained a party of European travellers, who happened to arrive there at that time; making the tomb of Pharaoh* ring with shouts and songs of merriment.

At different times I wandered among all these tombs. All were of the same general character; all possessed the same beauty and magnificence of design and finish, and in all, at the extreme end, was a large saloon, adorned with sculpture and paintings of extraordinary beauty, and containing a single sarcophagus. "The kings of the nations did lie in glory, every one in his own house, but thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch." Every sarcophagus is broken, and the bones of the kings of Egypt are scattered. In one I picked up a scull. I mused over it a moment, and handed it to Paul, who moralized at

* Supposed to be the tomb of Pharaoh Necho.

large. "That man," said he, "once talked, and laughed, and sang, and danced, and ate macaroni." Among the paintings on the walls was represented a heap of hands severed from the arms, showing that the hero of the tomb had played the tyrant in his brief hour on earth. I dashed the scull against a stone, broke it in fragments, and pocketed a piece as a memorial of a king. Paul cut off one of the ears, and we left the tomb.

Travellers and commentators concur in supposing that these magnificent excavations must have been intended for other uses than the burial, each of a single king. Perhaps, it is said, like the chambers of imagery seen by the Jewish prophet, they were the scene of idolatrous rites performed "in the dark;" and, as the Israelites are known to have been mere copyists of the Egyptians, these tombs are supposed to illustrate the words of Ezekiel:—"Then said he to me, Son of man, dig now in the wall; and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and see the abominable things that they do there. So I went in, and saw, and behold, every form of creeping thing and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about."—Ezek., viii., 8–10.

Amid the wrecks of former greatness which tower above the plain of Thebes, the inhabitants who now hover around the site of the ancient city are perhaps the most miserable in Egypt. On one side of the river they build their mud huts around

the ruins of the temples, and on the other their best habitations are in the tombs; wherever a small space has been cleared out, the inhabitants crawl in, with their dogs, goats, sheep, women, and children; and the Arab is passing rich who has for his sleeping-place the sarcophagus of an ancient Egyptian.

I have several times spoken of my intended journey to the great Oasis. Something was yet wanting in my voyage on the Nile. It was calm, tame, and wanting in that high excitement which I had expected from travelling in a barbarous country. A woman and child might go safely from Cairo to the Cataracts; and my blood began to run sluggishly in my veins. Besides, I had a great curiosity to see an oasis; a small spot of green fertile land in the great desert, rising in solitary beauty before the eyes of the traveller, after days of journeying through arid wastes, and divided by vast sandy ramparts from the rest of the world. The very name of the great Oasis in the Lybian desert carried with it a wild and almost fearful interest, too powerful for me to resist. It was beyond the beaten track; and the sheik with whom I made my arrangements insisted on my taking a guard, telling me that he understood the character of his race, and an Arab in the desert could not resist the temptation to rob an unprotected traveller. For my own part, I had more fear of being followed by a party of the very unprepossessing fellows who were stealthily digging among the tombs, and all of whom knew of the

preparations for our journey, than from any we might encounter in the desert. I must confess, however, that I was rather amused when I reviewed my body-guard, and, with the gravest air in the world, knocked out the primings from their guns, and primed them anew with the best of English powder. When I got through I was on the point of discharging them altogether, but it would have broken the poor fellows' hearts to disappoint them of their three piasters (about fifteen cents) per diem, dearly earned by a walk all day in the desert, and a chance of being shot at.

In the afternoon before the day fixed for my departure, I rode by the celebrated Memnons, the Damy and Shamy of the Arabs. Perhaps it was because it was the last time, but I had never before looked upon them with so much interest. Among the mightier monuments of Thebes, her temples and her tombs, I had passed these ancient statues with a comparatively careless eye, scarcely bestowing a thought even upon the vocal Memnon. Now I was in a different mood, and looked upon its still towering form with a feeling of melancholy interest. I stood before it and gazed up at its worn face, its scars and bruises, and my heart warmed to it. It told of exposure, for unknown ages, to the rude assaults of the elements, and the ruder assaults of man. I climbed upon the pedestal—upon the still hardy legs of the Memnon. I pored over a thousand inscriptions in Greek and Latin. A thousand names of strangers from distant lands, who had come like me to do

homage to the mighty monuments of Thebes; Greeks and Romans who had been in their graves more than 2000 years, and who had written with their own hands that they had heard the voice of the vocal Memnon. But, alas! the voice has departed from Memnon; the soul has fled, and it stands a gigantic skeleton in a grave of ruins. I returned to my boat, and in ten minutes thereafter, if the vocal Memnon had bellowed in my ears, he could not have waked me.

CHAPTER X.

The Arabs and the Pacha.—March into the Desert.—Arab Christians.—A cold Reception.—Arab Punctuality.—A Night in a Convent.—An Arab Christian Priest.—Speculative Theology.—A Journey ended before commenced.

Early in the morning I was on the bank, waiting for my caravan and guides. I had every thing ready, rice, macaroni, bread, biscuit, a hare, and a few shirts. I had given instructions to my rais to take my boat down to Siout, and wait for me there, as my intention was to go from the great Oasis to the Oasis of Siwah, containing the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Ammon, to destroy which Cambyses had sent from this very spot an army of 50,000 men, who, by-the-way, left their bones on the sands of Africa; and I need not remind the

reader that Alexander the Great had visited it in person, and been acknowledged by the priests as the son of Jupiter. I waited a little longer, and then, becoming impatient, mounted a donkey to ride to the sheik's. My rais and crew accompanied me a little way; they were the only persons to bid us farewell; and, as Paul remarked, if we never got back, they were the only persons to make any report of us to our friends.

The sheik's house was situated near the mountains, in the midst of the tombs forming the great Necropolis of Thebes, and we found him surrounded by fifty or sixty men, and women and children without number, all helping to fit out the expedition. There did not seem to be much choice among them; but I picked out my body-guard, and when I looked at their swarthy visages by broad daylight, I could not help asking the sheik what security I had against them. The sheik seemed a little touched, but, pointing to the open doors of the tombs, and the miserable beings around us, he said that he had their wives and children in his hands as pledges for my safety. Of the sheik himself I knew nothing, except that he was sheik. I knew, too, that though by virtue of the pacha's firman he was bound to do every thing he could for me, he was no friend to the pacha or his government; for one evening, in speaking of the general poverty of the Arabs, he said that if one fourth of them owned a musket, one charge of powder, and one ball, before morning there would not be a Turk in Egypt. However, I knew all this before.

At 12 o'clock the last sack of biscuit was packed upon the camels, and I mounted a fine dromedary, while my companions bade farewell to their wives, children, and friends; a farewell so calm and quiet, particularly for a people whose blood was warmed by the burning sun of Africa, that it seemed cold and heartless.

My caravan consisted of six camels, or rather four camels and two dromedaries, four camel-drivers armed with swords, eight men with pistols and muskets, Paul, and myself. It was the first time I had undertaken a journey in the desert. My first endeavour was to learn something of the character of my companions, and even Paul became perfectly satisfied and pleased with the journey, when upon acquaintance he found that their ugly outsides gave no true indication of the inward man.

Our guide, he who was to conduct us through the pathless desert, was not yet with us; he lived at a village about four miles distant, and a messenger had been sent forward to advise him of our coming. Riding for the last time among the ruined temples of Thebes, beyond the limits of the ancient city, our road lay behind the valley bordering the river, and along the edge of the desert. On one side was one of the richest and most extensive valleys of the Nile, well cultivated, and at this season of the year covered with the richest greens; on the other were barren mountains and a sandy desert.

In about four hours we saw, crossing the valley,

and stopping on the edge of the desert, a single Arab. It was our messenger, come to tell us that our guide would meet us at a Christian church, about four hours' march in the desert. We now left the borders of the valley, and struck directly into the desert. Before us, at some distance over a sandy plain, was a high range of sandstone mountains, and beyond these was the mighty waste of sand and barrenness. Towards evening, we saw from afar the church at which we were to meet our guide. It was the only object that rose above the level of the sands; and as the setting sun was fast reminding us that the day was closing, it looked like a resting-place for a weary traveller.

Congratulating myself upon my unexpected good fortune in meeting with those who bore the name of Christians, I was still more happy in the prospect, for this night at least, of sleeping under a roof. As we approached we saw the figure of a man stealing along the wall, and were near enough to hear the hasty closing of the door, and the heavy drawing of bolts inside. It was nine o'clock, when we dismounted and knocked at the door of the convent, but received no answer; we knocked again and again without success. We then commenced a regular battery. I rattled against the door with my Nubian club, in a small way like Richard at the gate of the castle of Front de Bœuf; but my blows did not tell like the battle-axe of the Lionhearted, and the churlish inmates, secure behind their strong walls, paid no regard to us. Tired of knocking, and irritated at this inhospitable treatment from

men calling themselves Christians, I walked round the building, to see if by accident there was not some back-door left open. The convent was enclosed by a square wall of unburnt brick, twelve or fourteen feet high, and not a door, window, or loophole was to be seen. It was built for defence against the roving Arabs, and if we had intended to storm it, we could not have found an assailable point. I returned, vexed and disappointed, and calling away the men, and almost cursing the unchristian spirit of its inmates, I pitched my tents under its walls, and prepared to pass the night in the desert.

I had hardly stretched myself upon my mat, before I heard the smart trot of a dromedary, and presently my guide, whom I had almost forgotten, dismounted at the door of the tent. He was a tall, hard-faced, weather-beaten man of about fifty, the white hairs just beginning to make their appearance in his black beard. I wanted to have a good view of him, and calling him inside, gave him a seat on the mat, a pipe, and coffee. He told me that for many years he had been in the habit of going once a year to the Oasis, on a trading-voyage, and that he knew the road perfectly. Almost the first thing he said was, that he supposed I intended to remain there the next day. The Arabs, like most other Orientals, have no respect for the value of time; and among the petty vexations of travelling among them, few annoyed me more than the eternal "bokhara," "bokhara,"—"to-morrow," "to-morrow." When they first sent to this guide to

know whether he could engage with me, he said he was ready at any moment, by which he probably meant a week's notice; and when they sent word that I had named a particular day, he probably thought that I would be along in the course of two or three thereafter, and was no doubt taken by surprise when the messenger came to tell him that I was already on the march. I of course had no idea of remaining there. He told me that I had better stay; that one day could not make any difference, and finally said he had no bread baked, and must have a day or two to prepare himself. I answered that he had told the sheik at Thebes that he would be ready at any moment—that it was absurd to think I would wait there in the desert—that I would not be trifled with, and if he was not ready the next morning, I would ride over to his village and make complaint to the sheik. After a long parley, which those only can imagine who have had to deal with Arabs, he promised to be there at sunrise the next morning, and took his leave.

After supper, when, if ever, a man should feel good-natured, I again began to feel indignant at the churlish inmates of the convent, and resolved upon another effort to see what stuff these Christians were made of. I knew that the monks in these isolated places, among fanatic Mussulmans, were sometimes obliged to have recourse to carnal weapons; and telling Paul to keep a lookout, and give me notice if he saw the barrel of a musket presenting itself over the wall, I again commenced thundering at the door; almost at the first

blow it was thrown wide open, with a suddenness that startled me, and a dark, surly, and half-naked Arab stood facing me in the doorway. He had been reconnoitring, and though not sufficiently assured to come out and welcome us, he was ready to open when again summoned. With no small degree of asperity, and certainly without the meekness of the character upon which I was then presuming, I asked him if that was his Christian spirit, to let a stranger and a Christian sleep outside his walls when he had a roof to shelter him; and, before he could interpose a word, I had read him a homily upon the Christian virtues, that would have done credit to some pulpits. He might have retorted upon me, that with the Christian duties coming so glibly from my tongue, I was amazingly deficient in the cardinal virtue of forbearance; but I had the satisfaction of learning that I had not been excluded by the hands of Christians. The priests and monks had gone to a neighbouring village, and he was left alone. I followed him through a sort of courtyard into a vestibule, where was a noble fire, with a large caldron boiling over it. He neither asked me to stay nor told me to go, and seated himself by the fire, perfectly indifferent to my movements. As soon as I had satisfied myself that he was alone, and saw that my Arabs had followed me, I thought I ran no risk in considering the building as a castle which I had stormed, and him as the captive of my bow and spear. I therefore required him to show me the interior of the convent, and he immediately took

up a blazing stick from the fire, and conducted me within; and when I told him that I meant to sleep there, he said it would be for him a night "white as milk."

From the vestibule the door opened into the chapel, which consisted of a long apartment running transversely, the door in the centre; the floor was covered with mats, ostrich-eggs were suspended from the ceilings, and three or four recesses contained altars to favourite saints. Directly opposite the door was a larger recess, in which stood the great altar, separated by a railing, ornamented with bone and mother of pearl, and over the top were four pictures of St. George slaying the dragon. I walked up and down the chapel two or three times, followed in silence by my swarthy friends, not altogether with the reverential spirit of a pious Christian, but with the prudence of a man of the world, looking out for the best place to sleep, and finally deposited my mat at the foot of the great altar.

I might better have slept on the sand, after all, for the walls of the church were damp, and a strong current of air from the large window above had been pouring in upon me the whole night. When I first woke I felt as if pinned to the floor, and I was startled and alarmed at the recurrence of a malady, because of which I was then an exile from home. I went outside, and found, although it was late, that the guide had not come. If he had been there I should no doubt have gone on, but, most fortunately for me, I had time to reflect.

I was a changed man since the day before; my buoyancy of spirit was gone, and I was depressed and dejected. I sent a messenger, however, for the guide; and, while I was sitting under the walls, hesitating whether I should expose myself to the long and dreary journey before me, I saw four men coming across the desert towards the convent. They were the priests and three of his Christian flock; and their greeting was such as to make me reproach myself for the injustice I had done the Arab Christians, and feel that there was something in that religion, even in the corrupt state in which it existed there, that had power to open and warm the heart. The priest was a tall thin man, his dark face almost covered with a black beard and mustaches, and wore the common blue gown of the better class of Arabs, with a square black cap on his head, and his feet bare. I could not understand him, but I could read in his face that he saluted me as a brother Christian, and welcomed me to all that a brother Christian could give.

Living as we do, in a land where the only religious difference is that of sect, and all sects have the bond of a common faith, it is difficult to realize the feeling which draws together believers in the same God and the same Redeemer, in lands where power is wielded by the worshippers of a false religion. One must visit a country in which religion is the dividing line—where haughty and deluded fanatics are the masters—and hear his faith reviled

and its professors persecuted and despised, to know and feel how strong a tie it is.

After exchanging our greetings outside, the priest led the way to the church. I do not know whether it was a customary thing, or done specially in honour of me (Paul said the latter), but at any rate he immediately lighted up the edifice, and slipping over his frock a dirty white gown with a large red cross down the back, commenced the service of the mass. His appearance and manner were extremely interesting, and very different from those of the priest I had seen at Esneh. His fine head, his noble expression, his earnestness, his simplicity, his apparent piety, his long black beard and mustaches, his mean apparel and naked feet, all gave him the primitive aspect of an apostle. He was assisted by a dirty, ragged, barefooted boy, who followed him round with a censer of incense, vigorously perfuming the church from time to time, and then climbing up a stand, holding on by his naked feet, and reading a lesson from the thumbed, torn, and tattered leaves of an Arabic Bible. There were but three persons present besides myself; poor, ignorant people, far astray, no doubt, from the path of true Christianity, but worshipping in all honesty and sincerity, according to the best light they had, the God of their fathers. The priest went through many long and unmeaning forms, which I did not understand, but I had seen things quite as incomprehensible to me in the splendid cathedrals of Europe, and I joined, so far as I could, in the humble worship of these Egyp-

tian Christians. There were no vessels of silver and gold, no imposing array of costly implements, to captivate the senses. A broken tumbler, a bottle of wine, and three small rolls of bread, formed the simple materials for the holy rite of the Lord's Supper. The three Arabs partook of it, and twice it was offered to me, but the feelings with which I had been accustomed to look upon this solemn saccrifice forbade me to partake of the consecrated elements; and never did I regret my unworthiness so bitterly, as when it prevented me from joining in the holy feast with these simple-hearted Christians.

In the mean time Paul came in, and the service being ended, I fell into conversation with the priest. He was a good man, but exceedingly ignorant, weak, and of great simplicity of character. I inquired of him touching the number and condition of the Christians under his charge, and their state of security under the government of the pacha, and, among other things, asked him if they increased. He told me that they remained about the same, or perhaps rather decreased. I asked him if a Mussulman ever became a Christian. He answered never, but sometimes a Christian would embrace the religion of Mohammed, and assigned a cause for this unhappy difference which I am sorry to mention, being no less than the influence of the tender passion. He told me that in the free intercourse now existing under the government of the pacha between Christians and Mussulmans, it often happened that a Christian youth became enam-

oured of a Moslem girl, and as they could not by any possibility marry and retain their separate religions, it was necessary that one of them should change. The Moslem dare not, for death by the hands of her own friends would be the certain consequence, while the Christian, instead of running any temporal risk, gains with his bride the protection and favour of the Mussulmans. Paul seemed rather scandalized at this information, and began to catechise the priest on his own account. I could not understand the conversation, but could judge from the movements, that Paul was examining him on that cardinal point, the sign of the cross. All appeared to go smoothly enough for a little while, but I soon noticed the flashing of Paul's eyes, and sundry other symptoms of indignation and contempt. I asked him several times what it was all about; but, without answering, he walked backward and forward, slapping his hands under the priest's nose, and talking louder and faster than ever, and I had to take hold of him and ask him sharply what the plague was the matter, before I could get a word out of him. "A pretty Christian," said Paul; "fast fifty-six days for Lent, when we fast only forty-six: forty that our Saviour was in the mount, and six Sundays." I told him there was not so much difference between them as I thought, as it was only ten days; he looked at me for a moment, and then, as if fearful of trusting himself, shrugged his shoulders, and marched out of the chapel. During all this time, the condition of the poor priest was pitiable and amusing;

he had never been so sharply questioned before, and he listened with as much deference to Paul's questions and rebukes as if he had been listening to the pope of Rome, and when it was over looked perfectly crestfallen.

It was twelve o'clock when the man we had sent after the guide returned, but before this time my malady had increased to such a degree as to leave me no option; and I had resolved to abandon the Oasis, and go back to Thebes. I had great reason to congratulate myself upon my accidental detention, and still greater that the symptoms of my malady had developed themselves before I had advanced another day's journey in the desert. Still, it was with a heavy heart that I mounted my dromedary to return. I had not only the regret of being compelled abruptly to abandon a long-cherished plan, but I had great uneasiness as to what was to become of me on my arrival at Thebes. My boat was probably already gone. I knew that no other could be obtained there, and, if obliged to wait for a casual opportunity, I must live in my tent on the banks of the river, or in one of the tombs. My anxieties, however, were quickly dispelled on my arrival at Thebes, where I found the English gentleman and lady whom I had met at Cairo, and afterward at the Cataracts. They kindly took me on board their boat. And so ended my expedition to the great Oasis.

CHAPTER XI.

A Travelling Artist and Antiquary.—An Egyptian Sugar-house.—Grecian Architecture.—A Melancholy Greeting.—Tyranny of the Pacha.—Amateurs of Physic.—Memphis.—Adventure with a Wild Boar.—Perils of a Pyramid.—The Catacombs of Birds.—Amor Patriæ.—Voyaging on the Nile.

I SHALL never forget the kindness of these excellent friends; and, indeed, it was a happy thing for me that my own boat had gone, and that I was thrown upon their hospitality; for, in addition to the greater comforts I found with them, I had the benefit of cheerful society under circumstances when to be alone would have been horrible. Even when we arrived at Siout, after a voyage of seven days, they would not let me leave them, but assumed the right of physicians, and prescribed that I should be their guest until perfectly restored. I remained, accordingly, three days longer with them, my little boat following like a tender to a man-of-war, and passed my time luxuriously. I had books, conversation, and a medicine-chest. But one thing troubled me. We had a cook who looked upon his profession as a liberal and enlightened science, and had attained its very highest honours. He had served various noblemen of eminent taste, had accumulated 50,000 dollars, and was now cooking at the rate of fifty dollars a month upon the Nile. Michel was an extraordi-

nary man. He came from the mountains of Dalmatia, near the shores of the Adriatic; one of a small nation who had preserved the name, and form, and spirit of a republic against Italians, Hungarians, and Turks, and fell only before the irresistible arm of Napoleon. He had been a great traveller in his youth, and besides his attainments in the culinary art, was better acquainted with history, ancient and modern, than almost any man I ever met. He had two great passions, the love of liberty and the love of the fine arts (cookery included), and it was really extraordinary to hear him, with a ladle in his hand, and tasting from time to time some piquant sauce, discourse of the republics of Rome and America, of the ruins of Italy, Palmyra, and Egypt. Michel's dinners, making proper allowance for the want of a daily market, would have done honour to the best lord he ever served, and I was obliged to sit down, day after day, to my tea, rice-water, biscuit, &c., and listen to the praises of his dainties while they passed untasted from me.

It was not until within two days of Cairo that we parted, with an agreement to meet at Jerusalem and travel together to Palmyra. We did meet for a few moments at Cairo, but the plague was beginning to rage, the pacha had been putting himself into quarantine, and we had barely time to renew our engagement, which a particularly unfortunate circumstance (the illness of Mrs. S.) prevented us from keeping, and we never met again. Few things connected with my compelled depart-

ure from the Holy Land gave me more regret than this; and if these pages should ever meet their eyes, they will believe me when I say that I shall remember, to the last day of my life, their kindness on the Nile.*

The story of my journeying on this river is almost ended. Kenneh was our first stopping-place on our way down; a place of considerable note, there being a route from it across the desert to Cosseir, by which many of the pilgrims, and a great portion of the trade of the Red Sea, are conveyed.

At Ramaioum, not far below Siout, we went ashore to visit a sugar-factory belonging to the pacha. This manufactory is pointed out as one of the great improvements introduced into Egypt, and so far as it shows the capabilities of the Arabs, of which, however, no one can doubt, it may be considered useful. Formerly eighty Europeans were employed in the factory, but now the work is carried on entirely by Arabs. The principal was educated in France, at the expense of the pacha, and is one of the few who have returned to render any service to their country and master. The enlightened pacha understands thoroughly that liberal principle of political economy which consists in encouraging domestic manufactures, no matter at what expense. The sugar costs more than that

* Since this was in type, Mr. Gliddon, our consul at Cairo, has arrived in this country, who informs me that on their way to Palmyra, Mr. S. and his whole party were robbed in the desert. They got back safe to Damascus, but the route to Palmyra is now entirely broken up by the atrocities of the Bedouins.

imported, and is bought by none but governors and dependants of the pacha. It is made from cane, contains a great deal of saccharine matter, and has a good taste, but a bad colour. This factory, however, can hardly be considered as influential upon the general interests of the country, for its principal business is the making of rock-candy for the ladies of the harem. They gave us a little to taste, but would not sell any except to Mrs. S., the whole being wanted for the use of the ladies. There was also a distillery attached to the factory, under the direction of another Arab, who gave satisfactory evidence, in his own person at least, of the strength of the spirit made, being more than two thirds drunk.

The same evening we came to at Beni Hassan, and the next morning landed to visit the tombs, excavated in the sides of the mountain, and, like all the tombs in Egypt, except those of the kings at Thebes, occupying the finest positions on the Nile. In construction they are different from all others in Egypt. The doors have regular Doric columns, and they are the only specimens of architecture in Egypt which at all approximate to the Grecian style. This would not be at all extraordinary, if they were constructed after the invasion of Alexander and the settlement of the Greeks in the country, but it is ascertained that they were built long before that time; and indeed it is alleged by antiquaries that these tombs and the obelisks at Heliopolis are the oldest monuments in Egypt. The interiors are large and handsomely propor-

tioned (one of them being sixty feet square and forty feet high), and adorned with paintings, representing principally scenes of domestic life. Among them Mr. S. and myself made out one, which is constantly to be seen at the present day, namely, a half-naked Egyptian with a skin of water across his back, precisely like the modern Arab in the streets of Cairo.

We returned to our boat, and being now within two days of Cairo, and having different places to stop at below, after dinner I said farewell to my kind friends, and returned to my own boat. My crew received me with three cheers, I was going to say, but they do not understand or practise that noisy mode of civilized welcome, and gave me the grave and quiet salutation of their country, all rising as soon as I touched the deck, and one after the other taking my hand in his, and touching it to his forehead and lips. My poor rais gave me a melancholy greeting. He had been unwell during the whole voyage, but since we parted he had been growing worse. He told me that our stars were the same, and that misfortune had happened to us both as soon as we separated. I could but hope that our stars were not inseparably connected, for I looked upon him as a doomed man. I had saved him at Cairo from being pressed into the pacha's service; and again in descending, when he stopped at Kenneh, he and his whole crew had been seized in the bazars, and in spite of their protestations that they were in the service of an American, the iron bands were put around their wrists, and the

iron collars round their necks. The governor afterward rode down to the river, and the American flag streaming from the mast-head of my little boat procured their speedy release, and saved them from the miserable fate of Arab soldiers. Under all the oppressions of the pacha's government, there is nothing more grinding than this. The governor of a town, or the sheik of a village, is ordered to furnish so many men as soldiers. He frequently has a leaning towards his own subjects or followers, and is disposed to save them if he can, and if any unlucky stranger happens to pass before the complement is made up, he is inevitably pounced upon as one of the required number. It is useless for the poor captive to complain that he is a stranger, and that the rights of hospitality are violated; he appeals to those who are interested in tightening his bonds; and when he is transferred to the higher authorities, they neither know nor care who he is or whence he comes. He has the thews and sinews of a man, and though his heartstrings be cracking, he can bear a musket, and that is enough. For centuries Egypt has been overrun by strangers, and the foot of a tyrant has been upon the necks of her inhabitants; but I do not believe that since the days of the Pharaohs there has been on the throne of Egypt so thorough a despot as the present pacha.

But to return to my rais. His first request was for medicine, which, unfortunately, I could not give him. The Arabs have a perfect passion for medicine. Early in our voyage my crew had discov-

ered that I had some on board, and one or another of them was constantly sick until they had got it all; and then they all got well except the rais; and for him I feared there was no cure.

On the eleventh, early in the morning, Paul burst into the cabin, cursing all manner of Arabs, snatched the gun from over my head, and was out again in a moment. I knew there was no danger when Paul was so valorous; and opening my broken shutter, I saw one of my men struggling with an Arab on shore, the latter holding him by the throat with a pistol at his head. The rascal had gone on shore just at daylight to steal wood, and, while in the act of tearing down a little fence, the watchful owner had sprung upon him, and seemed on the point of correcting for ever all his bad habits. His fellows ran to the rescue, with Paul at their head, and the culprit, relieved from the giant grasp of his adversary, quietly sneaked on board, and we resumed our progress.

In the course of my last day on the Nile I visited one of the greatest of its ruined cities, and for moral effect, for powerful impression on the imagination and feelings, perhaps the most interesting of them all. So absolute, complete, and total is the ruin of this once powerful city, that antiquaries have disputed whether there is really a single monument to show where the great Memphis stood; but the weight of authority seems to be, that its stately temples and palaces, and its thousands of inhabitants, once covered the ground now occupied by the little Arab village of Metrahenny.

This village stands about four miles from the river; and the traveller might pass through it and around it without ever dreaming that it had once been the site of a mighty city. He might, indeed, as he wandered around the miserable village, find, half buried in the earth, the broken fragments of a colossal statue; and, looking from the shattered relic to the half-savage Arabs around him, he might say to himself, "This is the work of other men and other times—and how comes it here?" But it would never occur to him that this was the last remaining monument of one of the greatest cities in the world. He might stop and gaze upon the huge mounds of ruins piled among the groves of palm, and ask himself, "Whence, too, came these?" But he would receive no answer that could satisfy him. In a curious and unsatisfied mood he would stroll on through the village, and from the other extremity would see, on the mountains towering before him, on the edge of the desert, a long range of pyramids and tombs, some crumbling in ruin, others upright and unbroken as when they were reared, and all stretching away for miles, one vast Necropolis; his reason and reflection would tell him that, where are the chambers of the dead, there must also have been the abodes of the living; and with wonder he would ask himself, "Where is the mighty city, whose inhabitants now sleep in yonder tombs? Here are the proud graves in which they were buried—where are the palaces in which they revelled, and the temples in which they worshipped?" And he returns to the broken

statue and the mounds of ruins, with the assurance that they are the sad remnants of a city, once among the proudest in the world.

My movements in Egypt were too hurried, my means of observation and my stock of knowledge too limited, to enable me to speculate advisedly upon the mystery which overhangs the history of her ruined cities; but I always endeavoured to come to some decision of my own, from the labours, the speculations, and the conflicting opinions of others. An expression which I had seen referred to in one of the books, as being the only one in the Bible in which Memphis was mentioned by name, was uppermost in my mind while I was wandering over its site. "And Memphis shall bury them." There must be, I thought, some special meaning in this expression; some allusion to the manner in which the dead were buried at Memphis, or to a cemetery or tombs different from those which existed in other cities of its day. It seems almost impossible to believe that a city, having for its burying-place the immense tombs and pyramids which even yet for many miles skirt the borders of the desert, can ever have stood upon the site of this miserable village; but the evidence is irresistible.

The plain on which this ancient city stood is one of the richest on the Nile, and herds of cattle are still seen grazing upon it, as in the days of the Pharaohs. The pyramids of Sacchara stand on the edge of the desert, a little south of the site of Memphis. If it was not for their mightier neigh-

bours, these pyramids, which are comparatively seldom honoured with a visit, would alone be deemed worthy of a pilgrimage to Egypt. The first to which we came is about 350 feet high, and 700 feet square at its base. The door is on the north side, 180 feet from the base. The entrance is by a beautifully-polished shaft, 200 feet long, and inclining at an angle of about ten degrees. We descended till we found the passage choked up with huge stones. I was very anxious to see the interior, as there is a chamber within, said to resemble the tomb of Agamemnon at Mycene; and having once made an interesting visit to that tomb of the king of kings, I wished to compare them; but it was excessively close, the sweat was pouring from us in streams, and we were suffocating with heat and dust. We came out and attempted to clamber up the side from the door to the top, but found it so difficult that we abandoned the effort, although Paul afterward mounted, with great ease, by one of the corners. While I was walking round the base, I heard a loud scream from that courageous dragoman, and saw him standing about half way up, the picture of terror, staring at a wild boar that was running away, if possible more frightened than himself. It was a mystery to me what the animal could be doing there, unless he went up on purpose to frighten Paul. After he got over his fright, however, the boar was a great acquisition to him, for I always had great difficulty in getting him into any tomb or other place of the kind without a guide; and, whenever I

urged him to enter a pyramid or excavation of any kind, he always threw the wild boar in my teeth, whose den, he was sure to say, was somewhere within.

There are several pyramids in this vicinity; among others, one which is called the brick pyramid, and which has crumbled so gradually and uniformly, that it now appears only a huge, misshapen mass of brick, somewhat resembling a beehive.

Retracing my steps, I continued along the edge of the mountain, which everywhere showed the marks of having been once lined with pyramids and tombs. I was seeking for one of the most curious and interesting objects that exist in Egypt—not so interesting in itself, as illustrating the character of the ancient inhabitants and their superstitions—I mean the burial-place of the sacred birds. Before we reached it, my Arab guide pointed to a pyramid on our left, saying that it contained a remarkable chamber, so high that a stone, hurled with a man's utmost strength, could not reach the top. As this pyramid was not mentioned in my guide-book, and I had no hope, in a country so trodden as Egypt now is, to become a discoverer of new wonders, I at first paid no attention to him; but he continued urging me to visit the lofty chamber; and at last, telling him that if I did not find it as he said, I would not give him a para of bucksheesh, I consented. There was no door to the pyramid; but about a hundred feet from its base, on the north side, was a square excavation or shaft about forty

feet deep, at the end of which was a little hole, not more than large enough to admit a man's arm. The Arab scooped out the sand, and with his hands and feet worked his meager body through, and I followed on my back, feet foremost. Though not particularly bulky, I wanted more room than the Arab, and my shoulders stuck fast. I was trying to work out again, when he grasped me by the heels, and began pulling me in with all his might; but luckily I had play for my legs, and, drawing them up, I gave him a kick with my heavy boots that kept him from taking hold again, until I had time to scramble out.

While Paul and the Arab were enlarging the hole below, the top of the pit was darkened, and looking up I saw two young Englishmen with whom I had dined a few days before, while coming down the river with Mr. S. and his lady. They had seen my boat, and come to join me; and I was very glad to see them; for though I had no actual apprehension of the thing, it occurred to me that it would be very easy for my Arab friends to roll a stone against the hole, and shut me in for ever. It would have been something to be buried in a pyramid, to be sure; but even the belief that it was the tomb of a king would hardly compensate for the inconvenience of being buried alive. We left their servant, a strapping Greek, at the door, and the Arab having enlarged the hole, we went to work systematically, laid ourselves upon our backs, and, being prepared beforehand, were dragged in by the heels. The narrow part of the hole was

not more than half the length of the body, and once past this, there was more room to move about than in any other of the pyramids; we could walk without stooping. Descending some hundred feet through an inclined passage excavated in the rock, with doors opening from it at regular intervals, we came to the large chamber of which the Arab had spoken. As in all the pyramids and tombs, the interior was in perfect darkness, and the feeble light of our torches gave us but an imperfect view of the apartment. The Arab immediately commenced his experiment with the stone; we could hear the whizzing as it cut through the empty space, and, after what seemed a very long time, the sound of its fall upon the rocky floor. At some distance up we could distinguish a door, and sending one of the Arabs up to it, by the flaring light of his torch, held as high as he could reach, we thought, but we were not certain, that we could make out the ceiling.

From hence it was but a short distance to the catacombs of birds; a small opening in the side of a rock leads to an excavated chamber, in the centre of which is a square pit or well. Descending the pit by bracing our arms, and putting our toes in little holes in the side, we reached the bottom, where, crawling on our hands and knees, we were among the mummies of the sacred ibis, the embalmed deities of the Egyptians. The extent of these catacombs is unknown, but they are supposed to occupy an area of many miles. The birds are preserved in stone jars, piled one upon another as closely as they can be stowed. By the

light of our torches, sometimes almost flat upon our faces, we groped and crawled along the passages, lined on each side with rows of jars, until we found ourselves again and again stopped by an impenetrable phalanx of the little mummies, or rather of the jars containing them. Once we reached a small open space, where we had room to turn ourselves, and knocking together two of the vessels, the offended deities within sent forth volumes of dust which almost suffocated us. The bird was still entire, in form and lineament perfect as the mummied man, and like him, too, wanting merely the breath of life. The Arabs brought out with them several jars, which we broke and examined above ground, more at our ease. With the pyramids towering around us, it was almost impossible to believe that the men who had raised such mighty structures, had fallen down and worshipped the puny birds whose skeletons we were now dashing at our feet.

My last work was now done, and I had seen my last sight on the Nile. Leaving behind me for ever the pyramids of Egypt, and the mountains and sands of the Libyan desert, I rode along the valley, among villages and groves of palm-trees, and a little before dark arrived at Ghizeh. My boat was there; I went on board for the last time; my men took to their oars, and in half an hour we were at Boulac. It was dark when we arrived, and I jumped on shore searching for a donkey, but none was to be had. I was almost tired out with the labours of the day, but Paul and I set off, new-

ertheless, on foot for Cairo. We were obliged to walk smartly, too, as the gate closed at nine o'clock; but when about half way there we met an Arab with a donkey, cheering the stillness of evening with a song. An extravagant price (I believe it was something like eighteen and three quarter cents) bribed him to dismount, and I galloped on to Cairo, while Paul retraced his steps to the boat. The reader may judge how completely "turned up" must have been the feelings of a quiet citizen of New-York, when told that, in winding at night through the narrow streets of Grand Cairo, the citizen aforesaid felt himself at home; and that the greeting of Francisco, the garçon at the Locanda d'Italia, seemed the welcome of an old friend. Hoping to receive letters from home, I went immediately to the American consul, and was disappointed; there were no letters, but there was other and interesting news for me; and as an American, identified with the honour of my country, I was congratulated there, thousands of miles from home, upon the expected speedy and honourable termination of our difficulties with France. An English vessel had arrived at Alexandria, bringing a London paper containing the president's last message, a notice of the offer of mediation from the English government, its acceptance by France, and the general impression that the quarrel might be considered settled, and the money paid. A man must be long and far from home to feel how dearly he loves his country—for his eye to brighten and his heart to beat when he hears her praises from the

lips of strangers; and when the paper was given me, with congratulations and compliments on the successful and honourable issue of the affair with France, my feelings grew prouder and prouder as I read, until, when I had finished the last line, I threw up my cap in the old city of Cairo, and shouted the old gathering-cry, "Hurrah for Jackson!"

I have heard all manners of opinion expressed in regard to a voyage on the Nile; and may be allowed, perhaps, to give my own. Mrs. S. used frequently to say that, although she had travelled in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and Sicily, she had never enjoyed a journey so much before, and was always afraid that it would end too soon. Another lady's sentiments, expressed in my hearing, were just the contrary. For myself, being alone, and not in very good health, I had some heavy moments; but I have no hesitation in saying that, with a friend, a good boat, well fitted up, books, guns, plenty of time, and a cook like Michel, a voyage on the Nile would exceed any travelling within my experience. The perfect freedom from all restraint, and from the conventional trammels of civilized society, forms an episode in a man's life that is vastly agreeable and exciting. Think of not shaving for two months, of washing your shirts in the Nile, and wearing them without being ironed. True, these things are not absolutely necessary; but who would go to Egypt to travel as he does in Europe? "Away with all fantasies and fetters," is the motto of the tourist. We throw aside pretty much every thing except

our pantaloons; and a generous rivalry in long beards and soiled linen is kept up with exceeding spirit. You may go ashore whenever you like, and stroll through the little villages and be stared at by the Arabs, or walk along the banks of the river till darkness covers the earth; shooting pigeons, and sometimes pheasants and hares, besides the odd shots from the deck of your boat at geese, crocodiles, and pelicans. And then it is so ridiculously cheap an amusement. You get your boat with ten men for thirty or forty dollars a month, fowls for three piasters (about a shilling) a pair, a sheep for a half or three quarters of a dollar, and eggs almost for the asking. You sail under your own country's banner, and when you walk along the river, if the Arabs look particularly black and truculent, you proudly feel that there is safety in its folds. From time to time you hear that a French or English flag has passed so many days before you, and you meet your fellow-voyagers with a freedom and cordiality which exist nowhere but on the Nile.

These are the little every-day items in the voyage, without referring to the great and interesting objects which are the traveller's principal inducements and rewards, the ruined cities on its banks, the mighty temples and tombs, and all the wonderful monuments of Egypt's departed greatness. Of them I will barely say, that their great antiquity, the mystery that overhangs them, and their extraordinary preservation amid the surrounding desolation, make Egypt perhaps the most interesting

country in the world. In the words of an old traveller, "Time sadly overcometh all things, and is now dominant, and sitteth upon a sphinx, and looketh into Memphis and old Thebes, while his sister Oblivion reclineth semi-sominous on a pyramid, gloriously triumphing and turning old glories into dreams. History sinketh beneath her cloud. The traveller, as he passeth amazedly through those deserts, asketh of her who builded them, and she mumbleth something, but what it is he heareth not."

It is now more than three thousand years since the curse went forth against the land of Egypt. The Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek, the Roman, the Arabian, the Georgian, the Circassian, and the Ottoman Turk have successively trodden it down and trampled upon it; for thirty centuries the foot of a stranger has been upon the necks of her inhabitants; and in bidding farewell to this once favoured land, now lying in the most abject degradation and misery, groaning under the iron rod of a tyrant and a stranger, I cannot help recurring to the inspired words, the doom of prophecy: "It shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more among the nations; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt."

CHAPTER XII.

A good Word for the Arabs.—A Prophecy fulfilled.—Ruins of a Lost City.—A Sheik of the Bedouins.—Interviews and Negotiations.—A Hadj, or Pilgrimage to Mecca.—Mohammedan Heaven for Wives.—A French Sheik.—The Bastinado.—Departure for the Desert.

I HAD now finished my journey in Egypt, from the Mediterranean to the Cataracts, or, as the boundaries of this ancient country are given in the Bible, from "Migdol to Syene, even unto the borders of Ethiopia." For nearly two months I had been floating on the celebrated river, with a dozen Arabs, prompt to do my slightest bidding, and, in spite of bugs and all manner of creeping things, enjoying pleasures and comforts that are not to be found in Europe; and it was with something more than an ordinary feeling of regret that I parted from my worthy boatmen. I know that it is the custom with many travellers to rail at the Arabs, and perhaps to beat them, and have them bastinadoed; but I could not and cannot join in such oppression of this poor and much-abused people. On the contrary, I do not hesitate to say that I always found them kind, honest, and faithful, thankful for the smallest favour, never surly or discontented, and always ready and anxious to serve me with a zeal that I have not met in any other people; and, when they came up in a body to the

locanda to say farewell, I felt that I was parting with tried and trusty friends, most probably for ever. That such was the case with the rais, there could be little doubt; he seemed to look upon himself as a doomed man, and a broken cough, a sunken eye, and a hollow cheek proclaimed him one fast hurrying to the grave.

I was now about wandering amid new and different scenes. I was about to cross the dreary waste of sand, to exchange my quiet, easy-going boat for a caravan of dromedaries and camels; to pitch my tent wherever the setting sun might find me, and, instead of my gentle Arabs of the Nile, to have for my companions the wild, rude Bedouins of the desert. To follow the wandering footsteps of the children of Israel when they took up the bones of Joseph, and fled before the anger of Pharaoh, from their land of bondage; to visit the holy mountain of Sinai, where the Almighty, by the hands of his servant Moses, delivered the tables of his law to his chosen people.

But I had in view something beyond the holy mountain. My object was to go from thence to the Holy Land. If I should return to Suez, and thence cross the desert to El Arich and Gaza, I should be subjected to a quarantine of fourteen days on account of the plague in Egypt, and I thought I might avoid this by striking directly through the heart of the desert from Mount Sinai, to the frontier of the Holy Land. There were difficulties and perhaps dangers on this route; but besides the advantage of escaping the quarantine, an-

other consideration presented itself, which in the end I found it impossible to resist. This route was entirely new. It lay through the land of Edom—a land that occupies a large space on the pages of the Bible; Edom denounced by God himself, once given to Esau for his inheritance, "as being of the fatness of the earth," but now a desolate monument of the Divine wrath, and a fearful witness to the truth of the words spoken by his prophets. The English friends with whom I had dined at Thebes first suggested to me this route, referring me, at the same time, to Keith on the Prophecies, in which, after showing with great clearness and force the fulfilment of prophecy after prophecy, as illustrated by the writings and reports of travellers, the learned divine enlarges upon the prophecy of Isaiah against the land of Idumea, "None shall pass through it for ever and ever," and proves, by abundant references to the works of modern travellers, that though several have crossed its borders, none have ever passed through it. Burckhardt, he says, made the nearest approach to this achievement; but by reference to the geographical boundaries, he maintains that Burckhardt did not pass through the land of Edom; and so strenuously does the learned divine insist upon the fulfilment of the prophecy to its utmost extent, as to contend that if Burckhardt did pass through the land of Edom, he died in consequence of the hardships he suffered on that journey. I did not mean to brave a prophecy. I had already learned to regard the words of the inspired penmen with an interest I never felt before; and

with the evidence I had already had of the sure fulfilment of their predictions, I should have considered it daring and impious to place myself in the way of a still impending curse. But I did not go so far as the learned commentator, and to me the words of the prophet seemed sufficiently verified in the total breaking up of the route then travelled, as the great highway from Jerusalem to the Red Sea and India, and the general and probably eternal desolation that reigns in Edom.

Still, however, it added to the interest with which I looked upon this route; and, moreover, in this dreary and desolate region, for more than a thousand years buried from the eyes of mankind, its place unknown, and its very name almost forgotten, lay the long-lost city of Petra, the capital of Arabia Petræa, and the Edom of the Edomites, containing, according to the reports of the only travellers who have ever been permitted to enter it, the most curious and wonderful remains existing in the world: a city excavated from the solid rock, with long ranges of dwellings, temples, and tombs, cut in the sides of the mountain, and all lying in ruins—"thorns coming up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof, a habitation of dragons, a court for owls." Three parties had at different times visited Petræa, but neither of them had passed through the land of Idumea; and, according to the reports of the few travellers who had crossed its borders, the Bedouins who roamed over the dreary sands of Idumea were the most ferocious tribe of the desert race. It will not be con-

sidered surprising, therefore, that, having once conceived the project, I was willing to fulfil it even at the cost of some personal difficulty and hazard.

I have said that this route was entirely new. It was known that two Englishmen, with an Italian, long resident in Egypt, and understanding thoroughly the language and character of the Arabs, had started from Cairo about a year before, to make this journey, and as they had been heard of afterward in Europe, it was known that they had succeeded; but no account of their journey had ever been published, and all the intelligence I could obtain of the route and its perils was doubtful and confused. The general remark was, that the undertaking was dangerous, and that I had better let it alone. Almost the only person who encouraged me was Mr. Gliddon, our vice-consul, and probably if it had not been for him I should have given up the idea. Besides the difficulties of the road, there were others of a more personal nature. I was alone. I could not speak the language, and I had with me a servant who, instead of leading me on, and sustaining me when I faltered, was constantly torturing himself with idle fears, and was very reluctant to accompany me at all. Nor was this all; my health was far from being restored, and my friend Waghorn was telling me every day, with a warning voice, to turn my steps westward: but objections presented themselves in vain, and perhaps it was precisely because of the objections, that I finally determined upon attempting the journey through the land of Idumea.

By singular good fortune the sheik of Akaba was then at Cairo. The great yearly caravan of pilgrims for Mecca was assembling outside the walls, and he was there, on the summons of the pacha, to escort and protect them through the desert as far as Akaba. He was the chief of a powerful tribe of Bedouins somewhat reduced by long and bloody wars with other tribes, but still maintaining, in all its vigour, the wild independence of the race, and yet strong enough to set at defiance even the powerful arm of the pacha. A system of mutual forbearance seemed to exist between them, the Bedouins knowing that although the pacha might not subdue them, his long arm could reach and disturb them even in their sandy hills; while the pacha could not overlook the fact, that the effort would cost him the lives of his best troops, and that the plunder of their miserable tents would bring him neither glory nor profit. Thus the desert was still the possession of the Bedouins; they still claimed a tribute from the stranger for permission to pass over it, and this induced the pacha annually to invite the Sheik of Akaba to Cairo, to conduct the caravan for Mecca, knowing that if not so invited, even the sacred character of the pilgrims would not protect them in passing through his country.

I found him about a mile outside the walls, near the tombs of the califs, on the edge of the desert, sitting on a mat under his tent, and surrounded by a dozen of his swarthy tribe, armed with long sabres, pistols, and matchlock guns. The sheik was a short stout man, of the darkest shade of

bronze; his eye keen, roving, and unsettled; his teeth white; and his skin so dried up and withered, that it seemed cleaving to his very bones. At the first glance I did not like his face; it wanted frankness, and even boldness; and I thought at the time, that if I had met him alone in the desert I should not have trusted him. He received me with great civility, while his companions rose, gave me their low salaam, seated me on the mat beside him, and then resumed their own cross-legged attitude, with less noise than would have attended the entrance of a gentleman into a drawing-room on a morning call. All stared at me with silent gravity; and the sheik, though desert born and bred, with an air and manner that showed him familiar with the usages of good society in Cairo, took the pipe from his mouth and handed it to me.

All being seated, the consul's janizary, who had come with me, opened the divan; but he had scarcely begun to declare my object, before the whole group, sheik and all, apparently surprised out of their habitual phlegm, cried out together that they were ready to escort me, and to defend me with their lives against every danger. I said a few words, and they became clamorous in their assurances of the great friendship they had conceived for me; that life was nothing in my service; that they would sleep in my tent, guard and watch me by day and night; and, in short, that they would be my father, mother, sister, and brother, and all my relations, in the desert; and the final assurance was, that it would not be possible to travel that road

except under their protection. I then began to inquire the terms, when, as before, all spoke at once, some fixing one price, some another, and for bucksheesh whatever I pleased. I did not like this wild and noisy negotiation. I knew that I must make great allowance for the extravagant language of the Arabs; but there seemed to be an eagerness to get me among them, which, in my eyes, was rather ominous of bad intentions. They were known to be a lawless people, and distinguished, even among their desert brethren, as a wild and savage tribe. And these were the people with whom I was negotiating to meet in the desert, at the little fortress of Akaba, at the eastern extremity of the Red Sea; into whose hands I was to place myself, and from whom I was to expect protection against greater dangers.

My interview with them was not very satisfactory, and, wishing to talk the matter over more quietly with the sheik alone, I asked him to go with me to my hotel; whereupon the whole group started up at once, and, some on foot, and others on dromedaries or on horseback, prepared to follow. This did not suit me, and the sheik contrived to get rid of all except one, his principal and constant attendant, "his black," as he was called. He followed me on horseback, and when he came up into my room, it was, perhaps, the first time in his life that he had ever been under a roof. As an instance of his simplicity and ignorance, it may be worth mentioning here, although I did not know it until we were on the point of separating after

our journey was completed, that he mistook the consul's janizary, who wore a dashing red Turkish dress, sword, &c., for an officer of the pacha's household, and consequently had always looked upon me as specially recommended to him by the pacha. I could not come to any definite understanding with him. The precise service that I required of him was to conduct me from Akaba to Hebron, through the land of Edom, diverging to visit the excavated city of Petra; a journey of about ten days. I could not get him to name any sum as compensation for this service; he told me that he would conduct me for nothing, that I might give him what I pleased, &c. When I first spoke about the terms, at his tent, he had said twelve dollars a camel, and, as it seemed to me, he had named this sum without the least calculation, as the first that happened to occur to him. I now referred him to this price, which he had probably forgotten, hoping to establish it as a sort of basis upon which to negotiate; but when his attention was called to it, he insisted upon the twelve dollars, and something more for bucksheesh. A fair price for this service would have been about two dollars. I told him this did not satisfy me; that I wanted every thing definitely arranged beforehand, and that I would not give the enormous price he asked, and bucksheesh in proportion; but I could do nothing with him; he listened with perfect coolness; and taking his pipe from his mouth, in answer to every thing I said, told me to come to him at Akaba, come to him at his tent; he had

plenty of camels, and would conduct me without any reward, or I might give him what I pleased. We parted without coming to an arrangement. He offered to send one of his men to conduct me from Mount Sinai to Akaba; but as something might occur to prevent my going, I would not take him. He gave me, however, his signet, which he told me every Bedouin on that route knew and would respect, and writing his name under it according to the sound, I repeated it over and over, until I could pronounce it intelligibly, and treasured it up as a pass-word for the desert.

The next morning, under pretence that I went to see the starting of the great caravan of pilgrims for Mecca, I rode out to the sheik, and telling him that if I came to him I should come destitute of every thing, and he must have some good tobacco for me, I slipped a couple of gold pieces into his hand, and without any further remark, left the question of my going undetermined. It was worth my ride to see the departure of the caravan. It consisted of more than 30,000 pilgrims, who had come from the shores of the Caspian, the extremities of Persia, and the confines of Africa; and having assembled, according to usage for hundreds of years, at Cairo as a central point, the whole mass was getting in motion for a pilgrimage of fifty days, through dreary sands, to the tomb of the Prophet.

Accustomed as I was to associate the idea of order and decorum with the observance of all rites and duties of religion, I could not but feel sur-

prised at the noise, tumult, and confusion, the strifes and battles of these pilgrim-travellers. If I had met them in the desert after their line of march was formed, it would have been an imposing spectacle, and comparatively easy to describe; but here, as far as the eye could reach, they were scattered over the sandy plain, 30,000 people, with probably 20,000 camels and dromedaries, men, women, and children, beasts and baggage, all commingled in a confused mass that seemed hopelessly inextricable. Some had not yet struck their tents, some were making coffee, some smoking, some cooking, some eating, many shouting and cursing, others on their knees praying, and others, again, hurrying on to join the long moving stream that already extended several miles into the desert.

It is a vulgar prejudice, the belief that women are not admitted into the heaven of Mohammed. It is true that the cunning Prophet, in order not to disturb the joyful serenity with which his followers look forward to their promised heaven, has not given to women any fixed position there, and the pious Mussulman, although blessed with the lawful complement of four wives, is not bound to see among his seventy-two black-eyed houries the faces of his companions upon earth; but the women are not utterly cast out; they are deemed to have souls, and entitled to a heaven of their own; and it may be, too, that their visions of futurity are not less bright, for that there is a mystery to be unravelled beyond the grave, and they are not doomed to eternal companionship with their earthly lords.

In the wildest, rudest scene where woman appears at all, there is a sweet and undefinable charm; and their appearance among the pilgrims, the care with which they shrouded themselves from every eye, their long thick veils, and their tents or four-post beds with curtains of red silk, fastened down all around, and secured on the high backs of camels, were the most striking objects in the caravan. Next to them in interest were the miserable figures of the marabouts, santons, or Arab saints, having only a scanty covering of rags over their shoulders, and the rest of their bodies completely naked, yet strutting about as if clothed in purple and fine linen; and setting off utterly destitute of every thing, for a journey of months across the desert, safely trusting to that open-handed charity which forms so conspicuous an item in the list of Mussulman virtues. But the object of universal interest was the great box containing the presents and decorations for the tomb of the Prophet. The camel which bears this sacred burden is adorned with banners and rich housings, is watched and tended with pious care, and when his journey is ended, no meaner load can touch his back; he has filled the measure of a camel's glory, and lives and dies respected by all good Mussulmans.

In the evening, being the last of my stay in Cairo, I heard that Mr. Linant, the companion of M. Laborde on his visit to Petra, had arrived at Alexandria, and, with Mr. Gliddon, went to see him. Mr. L. is one of the many French emigrés driven from their native soil by political convulsions, and

who have risen to distinction in foreign lands by military talents, and the force of that restless energy so peculiar to his countrymen. Many years before, he had thrown himself into the Arabian Desert, where he had become so much beloved by the Bedouins, that on the occasion of a dispute between two contending claimants, the customs of their tribe were waived, the pretensions of the rivals set aside, and he was elected sheik of Mount Sinai, and invested with the flattering name, which he retains to this day, of Abdel Heg, or the slave of truth. Notwithstanding his desert rank and dignity, he received me with a politeness which savoured of the salons of Paris, and encouraged me in my intention of visiting Petra, assuring me that it would abundantly repay me for all the difficulties attending it; in fact, he spoke lightly of these, although I afterward found that his acquaintance with the language, his high standing among the Bedouins, and his lavish distribution of money and presents, had removed or diminished obstacles, which, to a stranger without these advantages, were by no means of a trifling nature. In addition to much general advice, he counselled me particularly to wear the Turkish or Arab dress, and to get a letter from the Wabeeb Effendi to the governor of the little fortress of Akaba. Mr. Linant has been twenty years in Egypt, and is now a bey in the pacha's service, and that very afternoon, after a long interview, had received orders from the great reformer to make a survey of the pyramids, for the purpose of deciding which of those gigantic monu-

ments, after having been respected by all preceding tyrants for 3000 years, should now be demolished for the illustrious object of yielding material for a petty fortress, or scarcely more useful and important bridge.*

Early in the morning I went into the bazars, and fitted out Paul and myself with the necessary dresses. Paul was soon equipped with the common Arab dress, the blue cotton shirt, tarbouch, and Bedouin shoes. A native of Malta, he was very probably of Arab descent in part, and his dark complexion and long black beard would enable him readily to pass for one born under the sun of Egypt. As for myself, I could not look the swarthy Arab of the desert, and the dress of the Turkish houaja or gentleman, with the necessary arms and equipments, was very expensive; so I provided myself with the unpretending and respectable costume of a Cairo merchant; a long red silk gown, with a black abbas of camels' hair over it, red tarbouch, with a green and yellow striped handkerchief rolled round it as a turban, white trousers, large red shoes over yellow slippers, blue sash, sword, and a pair of large Turkish pistols.

Having finished my purchases in the bazars, I

* On my return to Alexandria, I learned that Mr. Linant had reported that it would be cheaper to get stone from the quarries. After all, it is perhaps to be regretted that he had not gone on, as the mystery that overhangs the pyramids will probably never be removed until one of them is pulled down, and every stone removed, under the direction of some friend of science and the arts.

returned to my hotel ready to set out, and found the dromedaries, camels, and guides, and expected to find the letter for the governor of Akaba, which, at the suggestion of Mr. Linant, I had requested Mr. Gliddon to procure for me. I now learned, however, from that gentleman, that to avoid delay it would be better to go myself, first sending my caravan outside the gate, and representing to the minister that I was actually waiting for the letter, in which case he would probably give it to me immediately. I accordingly sent Paul with my little caravan to wait for me at the tombs of the califs, and, attended by the consul's janizary, rode up to the citadel, and stopped at the door of the governor's palace. The reader may remember that on my first visit to his excellency I saw a man whipped—this time I saw one bastinadoed. I had heard much of this, a punishment existing, I believe, only in the East, but I had never seen it inflicted before, and hope I never shall see it again. As on the former occasion, I found the little governor standing at one end of the large hall of entrance, munching, and trying causes. A crowd was gathered around, and before him was a poor Arab, pleading and beseeching most piteously, while the big tears were rolling down his cheeks; near him was a man whose resolute and somewhat angry expression marked him as the accuser, seeking vengeance rather than justice. Suddenly the governor made a gentle movement with his hand; all noise ceased; all stretched their necks and turned their eager eyes towards him; the ac-

cused cut short his crying, and stood with his mouth wide open, and his eyes fixed upon the governor. The latter spoke a few words in a very low voice, to me of course unintelligible, and, indeed, scarcely audible, but they seemed to fall upon the quick ears of the culprit like bolts of thunder; the agony of suspense was over, and, without a word or a look, he laid himself down on his face at the feet of the governor. A space was immediately cleared around; a man on each side took him by the hand, and stretching out his arms, kneeled upon and held them down, while another seated himself across his neck and shoulders. Thus nailed to the ground, the poor fellow, knowing that there was no chance of escape, threw up his feet from the knee joint, so as to present the soles in a horizontal position. Two men came forward with a pair of long stout bars of wood, attached together by a cord, between which they placed the feet, drawing them together with the cord so as to fix them in their horizontal position, and leave the whole flat surface exposed to the full force of the blow. In the mean time two strong Turks were standing ready, one at each side, armed with long whips much resembling our common cowskin, but longer and thicker, and made of the tough hide of the hippopotamus. While the occupation of the judge was suspended by these preparations, the janizary had presented the consul's letter. My sensibilities are not particularly acute, but they yielded in this instance. I had watched all the preliminary arrangements,

nerving myself for what was to come, but when I heard the scourge whizzing through the air, and, when the first blow fell upon the naked feet, saw the convulsive movements of the body, and heard the first loud, piercing shriek, I could stand it no longer; I broke through the crowd, forgetting the governor and every thing else, except the agonizing sounds from which I was escaping; but the janizary followed close at my heels, and, laying his hand upon my arm, hauled me back to the governor. If I had consulted merely the impulse of feeling, I should have consigned him, and the governor, and the whole nation of Turks, to the lower regions; but it was all important not to offend this summary dispenser of justice, and I never made a greater sacrifice of feeling to expediency, than when I re-entered his presence. The shrieks of the unhappy criminal were ringing through the chamber, but the governor received me with as calm a smile as if he had been sitting on his own divan, listening only to the strains of some pleasant music, while I stood with my teeth clinched, and felt the hot breath of the victim, and heard the whizzing of the accursed whip, as it fell again and again upon his bleeding feet. I have heard men cry out in agony when the sea was raging, and the drowning man, rising for the last time upon the mountain waves, turned his imploring arms towards us, and with his dying breath called in vain for help; but I never heard such heart-rending sounds as those from the poor bastinadoed wretch before me. I thought the governor would never make an end

of reading the letter, when the scribe handed it to him for his signature, although it contained but half a dozen lines; he fumbled in his pocket for his seal, and dipped it in the ink; the impression did not suit him, and he made another, and after a delay that seemed to me eternal, employed in folding it, handed it to me with a most gracious smile. I am sure I grinned horribly in return, and almost snatching the letter, just as the last blow fell, I turned to hasten from the scene. The poor scourged wretch was silent; he had found relief in happy insensibility; I cast one look upon the senseless body, and saw the feet laid open in gashes, and the blood streaming down the legs. At that moment the bars were taken away, and the mangled feet fell like lead upon the floor. I had to work my way through the crowd, and before I could escape I saw the poor fellow revive, and by the first natural impulse rise upon his feet, but fall again as if he had stepped upon red-hot irons. He crawled upon his hands and knees to the door of the hall, and here I rejoiced to see that, miserable, and poor, and degraded as he was, he yet had friends whose hearts yearned towards him; they took him in their arms and carried him away.

I was sick of Cairo, and in a right humour to bid farewell to cities, with all their artificial laws, their crimes and punishments, and all the varied shades of inhumanity from man to man, and in a few minutes I was beyond the gate, and galloping away to join my companions in the desert. At the tombs

of the califs I found Paul with my caravan; but I had not yet escaped the stormy passions of men. With the cries of the poor Arab still ringing in my ears, I was greeted with a furious quarrel, arising from the apportionment of the money I had paid my guides. I was in no humour to interfere, and, mounting my dromedary, and leaving Paul to arrange the affair with them as he best could, I rode on alone. It was a journey of no ordinary interest, on which I was now beginning my lonely way. I had travelled in Italy, among the mountains of Greece, the plains of Turkey, the wild steppes of Russia, and the plains of Poland, but neither of these afforded half the material for curious expectation that my journey through the desert promised. After an interval of 4000 years, I was about to pursue the devious path of the children of Israel, when they took up the bones of Joseph and fled before the anger of Pharaoh, among the mountain passes of Sinai, and through that great and terrible desert which shut them from the Land of Promise. I rode on in silence and alone for nearly two hours, and just as the sun was sinking behind the dark mountains of Mokattam, halted to wait for my little caravan; and I pitched my tent for the first night in the desert, with the door opening to the distant land of Goshen.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Caravan.—Arab Political Economy.—A projected Railroad.—The Sirocco.—Suez.—A travelled Englishman.—The Red Sea.—Embarcation of Pilgrims.—A Misadventure.—Scriptural Localities.—The bitter Fountain.

The arrangements for my journey as far as Mount Sinai had been made by Mr. Gliddon. It was necessary to have as my guides some of the Bedouins from around the mountains, and he had procured one known to him, a man in whom I could place the most implicit confidence; and possessing another not less powerful recommendation; in the fact that he had been with Messrs. Linant and Laborde to Petra. My caravan consisted of eight camels and dromedaries, and, as guide and camel-drivers, three young Bedouins from nineteen to twenty-two years old. My tent was the common tent of the Egyptian soldiers, bought at the government factory, easily carried, and as easily pitched; my bedding was a mattress and coverlet; and I had, moreover, a couple of boxes, about eighteen inches high, and the width of my mattress, filled with eatables, which I carried slung over the back of a camel, one upon each side, and at night, by the addition of two pieces of board, converted into a bedstead. My store of provisions consisted of bread, biscuit, rice, macaroni, tea, coffee, dried

apricots, oranges, a roasted leg of mutton, and two of the largest skins containing the filtered water of the Nile.

In the evening, while we were sitting around a fire, I inquired the cause of the quarrel from which I had escaped, and this led Toualeb into an explanation of some of the customs of the Bedouins. There exists among them that community of interest and property, for which radicals and visionaries contend in civilized society. The property of the tribe is to a great extent common, and their earnings, or the profits of their labour, are shared among the whole. A Bedouin's wives are his own; and as the chastity of women is guarded by the most sanguinary laws, his children are generally his own; his tent, also, and one or two camels are his, and the rest belongs to his tribe. The practical operation of this law is not attended with any great difficulty; for in general the *rest*, or that which belongs to the tribe, is nothing; there are no hoarded treasures, no coffers of wealth, the bequest of ancestors, or the gains of enterprise and industry, to excite the cupidity of the avaricious. Poor is the Bedouin born, and poor he dies, and his condition is more than usually prosperous when his poverty does not lead him to the shedding of blood.

I did not expect to learn lessons of political economy among the Bedouin Arabs, but in the commencement of my journey with them, I found the embarrassment and evil of trammelling individual enterprise and industry. The consul had applied to Toualeb. Toualeb was obliged to propose the

thing to such of his tribe as were then in Cairo, and all had a right to participate. The consequence was, that when we were ready to move, instead of five there were a dozen camels and dromedaries, and their several owners were the men whom I had left wrangling at the tombs of the califs; and even when it was ascertained that only five were wanted, still three supernumeraries were sent, that all might be engaged in the work. In countries where the labour of man and beast has a per diem value, the loss of the labour of three or four men and three or four camels would be counted; but in the East, time and labour have no value.

I do not mean to go into any dissertations on the character of the Bedouins, and shall merely refer to such traits as fell under my observation and were developed by circumstances. While I was eating my evening meal, and talking with Toualeb, the three young camel-drivers sat at the door of the tent, leaning on their hands and looking at me. I at first did not pay much attention to them, but it soon struck me as singular that they did not prepare their own meal; and, noticing them more attentively, I thought they were not looking so much at me as at the smoking pilau before me. I asked them why they did not eat their supper; and they told me that their masters had sent them away without a particle of any thing to eat. I was exceedingly vexed at this, inasmuch as it showed that I had four mouths to feed more than I had prepared for; no trifling matter on a journey in the desert, and one which Paul, as my

quartermaster, said it was utterly impossible to accomplish. I at first told one of them to mount my dromedary and go back to Cairo, assuring him that if he did not return before daylight I would follow and have both him and his master bastinadoed; but before he had mounted I changed my mind. I hated all returns and delays, and, smothering my wrath, told Paul to give them some rice and biscuit, at the risk of being obliged to come down to Arab bread myself. And so ended the first day of my journey.

Early in the morning we began our march, with our faces towards the rising sun. Before mid-day we were in as perfect a desert as if we were removed thousands of miles from the habitations of men—behind, before, and around us was one wide expanse of level and arid sands, although we were as yet not more than eight hours from the crowded city of Cairo, and I might already cry out, in the spirit of Neukomm's famous cavatina, "The sea, the sea, the open sea!" Indeed, in all the travelling in the East, nothing strikes one more forcibly than the quick transitions from the noise of cities to the stillness of the unpeopled waste.

It does, indeed, appear remarkable that, within so short a distance of Cairo, a city of so great antiquity, and large population, and on a road which we know to have been travelled more than 4000 years, and which at this day is the principal route to the Red Sea, there is so little travelling. During the whole day we did not meet more than a dozen Arabs, with perhaps twenty or thirty camels. But

a mighty change will soon be made in this particular. A railroad is about to be constructed across the desert, over the track followed by the children of Israel to the Red Sea. The pacha had already ordered iron from England for the purpose when I was in Egypt, and there is no doubt of its practicability, being only a distance of eighty miles over a dead level; but whether it will ever be finished, or whether, if finished, it will pay the expense, is much more questionable. Indeed, the better opinion is, that the pacha does it merely to bolster up his reputation in Europe as a reformer; that he has begun without calculating the costs; and that he will get tired and abandon it before it is half completed. It may be, however, that the reader will one day be hurried by a steam-engine over the route which I was now crossing at the slow pace of a camel; and when that day comes, all the excitement and wonder of a journey in the desert will be over. There will be no more pitching of tents, or sleeping under the starry firmament, surrounded by Arabs and camels; no more carrying provisions, and no danger of dying of thirst; all will be reduced to the systematic tameness of a cotton-factory, and the wild Arab will retire farther into the heart of the desert, shunning, like our native Indians, the faces of strangers, and following for ever the footsteps of his wandering ancestors. Blessed be my fortune, improvement had not yet actually begun its march.

In the course of the night I was suddenly awakened by a loud noise like the flapping of sails. A

high wind had risen, and my tent not being well secured, it had turned over, so that the wind got under it and carried it away. In the civilized world, we often hear of reverses of fortune which reduce a man to such a state that he has not a roof to cover him; but few are ever deprived of the protection of their roof in so summary a way as this, and it is but fair to add that few have ever got it back so expeditiously. I opened my eyes upon the stars, and saw my house fleeing from me. Paul and I were on our feet in a moment, and gave chase, and, with the assistance of our Arabs, brought it back and planted it again; I thought of the prudent Kentuckian who tied his house to a stump to keep it from being blown away, and would have done the same thing if I could have found a stump; but tree or stump in the desert there is none.

I was not disturbed again during the night; but the wind continued to increase, and towards morning and all the next day blew with great violence. It was the dread sirocco, the wind that has for ever continued to blow over the desert, carrying with it the fine particles of sand which, by the continued action of centuries, have buried the monuments, the temples, and the cities of Egypt; the sirocco, always disagreeable and dangerous, and sometimes, if the reports of travellers be true, suffocating and burying whole caravans of men and camels. Fortunately for me, it was blowing upon my back; but still it was necessary to draw my Arab cloak close over my head; and even then the

particles of sand found their way within, so that my eyes were soon filled with them, to my no small annoyance. This was very far from being one of the worst siroccos; but the sun was obscured, the atmosphere was a perfect cloud of sand, and the tracks were so completely obliterated, that a little after mid-day we were obliged to stop and take shelter under the lee of a hillock of sand; occasionally we had met caravans coming upon us through the thick clouds of sand, the Arabs riding with their backs to the heads of their camels, and their faces covered, so that not a single feature could be seen.

By the third morning the wind had somewhat abated, but the sand had become so scattered that not a single track could be seen. I was forcibly reminded of a circumstance related to me by Mr. Waghorn. A short time before I met him at Cairo, in making a hurried march from Suez, with an Arab unaccustomed to the desert, he encamped about mid-day, and starting two hours before daylight, continued travelling, half asleep, upon his dromedary, until it happened to strike him that the sun had arisen in the wrong place, and was then shining in his face instead of warming his back; he had been more than three hours retracing his steps to Suez. If I had been alone this morning, I might very easily have fallen into the same or a worse error. The prospect before me was precisely the same, turn which way I would; and, if I had been left to myself, I might have wandered as long as the children of Israel in search of the Prom-

ised Land, before I should have arrived at the gate of Suez.

We soon came in sight of the principal, perhaps the only object, which a stranger would mark in the route from Cairo to Suez. It is a large palm-tree, standing alone about half way across, the only green and living thing on that expanse of barrenness. We saw it two or three hours; and moving with the slow pace of our camels, it seemed as if we should never reach it; and then, again, as if we should never leave it behind us. A journey in the desert is so barren of incident, that wayfarers note the smallest circumstances, and our relative distance from the palm-tree, or half-way house, furnished occupation for a great part of the day.

At about twelve o'clock the next day we caught the first view of the Red Sea, rolling between the dark mountains of Egypt and Arabia, as in the days of Pharaoh and Moses. In an hour more we came in sight of Suez, a low dark spot on the shore, above the commencement of the chains of mountains on each side. About two hours before arriving, we passed, at a little distance on the left, a large khan, on the direct road to Akaba, built by the pacha as a stopping-place for the pilgrims on their way to Mecca. Three days before, more than 40,000 pilgrims had halted in and around it, but now not a living being was to be seen. About half an hour on the hither side of Suez, we came to a well, where, for the first time since we left Cairo, we watered our camels.

Even among the miserable cities of Turkey and Egypt, few present so wretched an appearance as Suez. Standing on the borders of the desert, and on the shore of the sea, with bad and unwholesome water, not a blade of grass growing around it, and dependant upon Cairo for the food that supports its inhabitants, it sustains a poor existence by the trade of the great caravan for Mecca, and the small commerce between the ports of Cosseir, Djiddeh, and Mocha. A new project has lately been attempted here, which, it might be supposed, would have a tendency to regenerate the fallen city. The route to India by the Red Sea is in the full tide of successful experiment; the English flag is often seen waving in the harbour; and about once in two months an English steamer arrives from Bombay; but even the clatter of a steamboat is unable to infuse life into its sluggish population.

The gate was open, a single soldier was lying on a mat basking in the sun, his musket gleaming brightly by his side, and a single cannon projected over the wall, frowning with Tom Thumb greatness upon the stranger entering the city. Passing the gate, we found ourselves within a large open space crowded with pilgrims. Even the small space enclosed by the walls was not more than one quarter occupied by buildings, and these few were at the farthest extremity. The whole intermediate area was occupied by pilgrims, scattered about in every imaginable position and occupation, who stared at me as I passed among them in my European dress; and noticed me according

to their various humours, some greeting me with a smile, some with a low and respectful salaam, and others with the black look and ferocious scowl of the bigoted and Frank-detesting Mussulmans.

We stopped in the square in front of the harbour, and inquired for an Englishman, the agent of Mr. Waghorn, to whom I had a letter, and from whom I hoped to obtain a bed; but he had arrived only two days before, and I doubt whether he had one for himself. He did all he could for me; but that was very little. I remember one thing about him, which is characteristic of a class of the European residents in Egypt—he had lived fourteen years between Alexandria and Cairo, and had never been in the desert before, and talked as if he had made a voyage to Babylon or Bagdad. He had provided himself with almost every thing that his English notions of comfort could suggest, and with these he talked of his three days' journey in the desert as a thing to be done but once in a man's life. I ought not to be harsh on him, however, for he was as kind as he could be to me, and in one thing I felt very sensibly the benefit of his kindness. By bad management my water-skins, instead of being old and seasoned, were entirely new; the second day out the water was injured, and the third it was not drinkable. I did not suffer so much as Paul and the Arabs did, having fallen into the habit of drinking but little, and assuaging my thirst with an orange; but I suffered from a cause much worse; my eyes were badly inflamed, and the water was so much impregnated with the

noxious absorption from the leather, that it destroyed the effect of the powders which I diluted in it, and aggravated instead of relieving the inflammation. The Englishman had used kegs made for the purpose, and had more than a kegful left, which he insisted on my taking. One can hardly imagine that the giving or receiving a keg of water should be a matter of any moment; but, much as I wanted it, indeed, all-important as it was to me for the rest of my journey, I hesitated to deprive him of it. Before going, however, I filled one of my skins, and counted it at the time one of the most valuable presents I had ever received. He had been in the desert too, the same day that we suffered from the sirocco, and his eyes were in a worse condition than mine.

The first thing he did was to find me a place to pass the night in. Directly opposite the open space was a large roguel or stone building, containing a ground and upper floor, and open in the centre, forming a hollow square. The whole building was divided by partitions into perhaps 100 apartments, and every one of these and the open square outside were filled with pilgrims. The apartments consisted merely of a floor, roof, door, and walls, and sometimes one or the other of these requisites was wanting, and its deficiency supplied by the excess of another. My room was in one corner, in the second story, and had a most unnecessary and uncomfortable proportion of windows; but I had no choice. I regretted that I had not pitched my tent outside the walls; but calling to my assistance the

ingenuity and contriving spirit of my country, fastened it up as a screen to keep the wind from coming upon me too severely, and walked out to see the little that was to be seen of Suez.

I had soon made a tour of the town; and having performed this duty, I hurried where my thoughts and feelings had long been carrying me, to the shore of the sea. Half a dozen vessels of some eighty or a hundred tons, sharp built, with tall spars for latteen sails, high poops, and strangely painted, resembling the ancient ships of war, or the Turkish corsair or Arab pirate of modern days, were riding at anchor in the harbour, waiting to take on board the thousands of pilgrims who were all around me. I followed the shore till I had turned the walls, and was entirely alone. I sat down under the wall, where I had an extensive view down the sea, and I saw the place where the waters divided for the passage of the Israelites. Two hours I strolled along the shore, and when the sun was sinking behind the dark mountains of Mokattam, I was bathing my feet in the waters of the coral sea.

Early in the morning I went out on the balcony, and looking down into the open square, filled with groups of pilgrims, male and female, sleeping on the bare ground, in all manner of attitudes, I saw directly under me a dead Tartar. He had died during the night, his deathbed a single plank, and he was lying in the sheepskin dress which he wore when living. Two friends from the frozen regions of the north, companions in his long pilgrimage,

were sitting on the ground preparing their morning coffee, and my Arabs were sleeping by his side, unconscious that but a few feet from them, during the stillness of the night, an immortal spirit had been called away. I gazed long and steadfastly upon the face of the dead Tartar, and moralized very solemnly—indeed, painfully—upon the imaginary incidents which my fancy summoned up in connexion with his fate. Nor was the possibility of my own death among strangers in a distant land, the least prominent or least saddening portion of my revery.

I ascribe this uncommon moping-fit to my exposing myself before breakfast. The stomach must be fortified, or force, moral and physical, is gone, and melancholy and blue devils are the inevitable consequence. After breakfast I was another creature. Oh, what a perfect animal is man, when coffee, eggs, and biscuit can thus change his very nature! My acute sensibility, my tender sympathies were gone, and when I went out again, I looked upon the body of the dead Tartar with the utmost indifference.

The pilgrims were now nearly all stirring, and the square was all in motion. The balcony, and, indeed, every part of the old roguel, were filled with the better class of pilgrims, principally Turks, the lords of the land; and in an apartment opening on the balcony, immediately next to mine, sat a beautiful Circassian, with the regular features and brilliant complexion of her country. By her side were two lovely children, fair and beautiful as their

mother. Her face was completely uncovered, for she did not know that a stranger was gazing on her, and, turning from the black visages around him to her fair and lovely face, was revelling in recollections of the beauties of his native land. And lo, the virtue of a breakfast! I, that by looking upon a dead Tartar had buried myself in the deserts of Arabia, written my epitaph, and cried over my own grave, was now ready to break a lance with a Turk to rob him of his wife.

The balcony and staircase were thronged with pilgrims, many still asleep, so that I was obliged to step over their bodies in going down, and out of doors the case was much the same. At home I should have thought it a peculiarly interesting circumstance to join a caravan of Mussulmans on their pilgrimage to Mecca, but long before I had seen them start from the gate of Cairo my feelings were essentially changed. I had hired my caravan for Mount Sinai; but feeling rather weak, and wishing to save myself six days' journey in the desert, I endeavoured to hire a boat to go down the Red Sea to Tor, supposed to be the Elino, or place of palm-trees, mentioned in the Exodus of the Israelites, and only two days' journey from Mount Sinai. The boats were all taken by the pilgrims, and these holy travellers were packed together as closely as sheep on board one of our North River sloops, for the New-York market. They were a filthy set, many of them probably not changing their clothes from the time they left their homes until they reached the tomb of the Prophet. I would rather

not have travelled with them, but as it was my only way of going down the sea, I applied to an Arab, to hire a certain portion of space on the deck of a boat for myself and servant; but he advised me not to think of such a thing. He told me if I hired and paid for such a space, the pilgrims would certainly encroach upon me; that they would beg, and borrow, and at last rob me; and, above all, that they were bigoted fanatics, and if a storm occurred, would very likely throw me overboard. With this character of his brethren from a true believer, I abandoned the idea of going by sea, and that the more readily, as his account was perfectly consistent with what I had before heard of the pilgrims.

The scene itself did not sustain the high and holy character of a pilgrimage. As I said before, all were abominably filthy; some were sitting around a great dish of pilau, thrusting their hands in it up to the knuckles, squeezing the boiled rice, and throwing back their heads as they crammed the huge morsel down their throats; others packing up their merchandise, or carrying water-skins, or whetting their sabres; others wrangling for a few paras; and in one place was an Arab butcher, bare-legged and naked from the waist upward, with his hands, breast, and face smeared with blood, leaning over the body of a slaughtered camel, brandishing an axe, and chopping off huge pieces of meat for the surrounding pilgrims. A little off from the shore a large party were embarking on board a small boat, to go down to their vessel, which was lying

at the mouth of the harbour; they were wading up to their middle, every one with something on his shoulders or above his head. Thirty or forty had already got on board, and as many more were trying to do the same; but the boat was already full. A loud wrangling commenced, succeeded by clinching, throttling, splashing in the water, and running to the shore. I saw bright swords gleaming in the air, heard the ominous click of a pistol, and in one moment more blood would have been shed, but for a Turkish aga, who had been watching the scene from the governor's balcony, and now dashing in among them with a huge silver-headed mace, and laying about him right and left, brought the turbulent pilgrims to a condition more suited to their sacred character.

At about nine o'clock I sent off my camels to go round the head of the gulf, intending to cross over in a boat and meet them. At the moment they left the roguel, two friends were holding up a quilt before the body of the dead Tartar, while a third was within, washing and preparing it for burial. At twelve o'clock I got on board my boat; she was like the others, sharp built, with a high poop and tall latteen sails, and, for the first time in all my travelling, I began to think a voyage better than a journey. In addition to the greater ease and pleasantness, there was something new and exciting in the passage of the Red Sea; and we had hardly given our large latteen sails to the wind, before I began to talk with the rais about carrying me down to Tor; but he told me the boat was too

small for such a voyage, and money would not induce him to attempt it. Late in the afternoon we landed on the opposite side, on the most sacred spot connected with the wanderings of the Israelites, where they rose from the dry bed of the sea, and, at the command of Moses, the divided waters rushed together, overwhelming Pharaoh and his chariots, and the whole host of Egypt. With the devotion of a pious pilgrim, I picked up a shell and put it in my pocket as a memorial of the place, and then Paul and I, mounting the dromedaries which my guide had brought down to the shore in readiness, rode to a grove of palm-trees, shading a fountain of bad water, called ayoun Moussa, or the fountain of Moses. I was riding carelessly along, looking behind me towards the sea, and had almost reached the grove of palm-trees, when a large flock of crows flew out, and my dromedary, frightened with their sudden whizzing, started back and threw me twenty feet over his head, completely clear of his long neck, and left me sprawling in the sand. It was a mercy I did not finish my wanderings where the children of Israel began theirs; but I saved my head at the expense of my hands, which sank in the loose soil up to the wrist, and bore the marks for more than two months afterward. I seated myself where I fell, and as the sun was just dipping below the horizon, told Paul to pitch the tent, with the door towards the place of the miraculous passage. I shall never forget that sunset scene, and it is the last I shall inflict upon the reader. I was sitting on the sand on the very spot where the cho-

sen people of God, after walking over the dry bed of the sea, stopped to behold the divided waters returning to their place and swallowing up the host of the pursuers. The mountains on the other side looked dark and portentous, as if proud and conscious witnesses of the mighty miracle, while the sun, descending slowly behind them, long after it had disappeared, left a reflected brightness, which illumined with an almost supernatural light the dark surface of the water.

But to return to the fountains of Moses. I am aware that there is some dispute as to the precise spot where Moses crossed; but having no time for skepticism on such matters, I began by making up my mind that this was the place, and then looked around to see whether, according to the account given in the Bible, the face of the country and the natural landmarks did not sustain my opinion. I remember I looked up to the head of the gulf, where Suez or Kolsum now stands, and saw that almost to the very head of the gulf there was a high range of mountains which it would be necessary to cross, an undertaking which it would have been physically impossible for 600,000 people, men, women, and children, to accomplish, with a hostile army pursuing them. At Suez, Moses could not have been hemmed in as he was; he could go off into the Syrian desert, or, unless the sea has greatly changed since that time, round the head of the gulf. But here, directly opposite where I sat, was an opening in the mountains, making a clear passage from the desert to the

shore of the sea. It is admitted that from the earliest history of the country, there was a caravan route from the Rameseh of the Pharaohs to this spot, and it was perfectly clear to my mind that, if the account be true at all, Moses had taken that route; that it was directly opposite me, between the two mountains, where he had come down with his multitude to the shore, and that it was there he had found himself hemmed in, in the manner described in the Bible, with the sea before him, and the army of Pharaoh in his rear; it was there he had stretched out his hand and divided the waters; and probably on the very spot where I sat, the children of Israel had kneeled upon the sands to offer thanks to God for his miraculous interposition. The distance, too, was in confirmation of this opinion. It was about twenty miles across; the distance which that immense multitude, with their necessary baggage, could have passed in the space of time (a night) mentioned in the Bible. Besides my own judgment and conclusions, I had authority on the spot, in my Bedouin Toualeb, who talked of it with as much certainty as if he had seen it himself; and, by the waning light of the moon, pointed out the metes and bounds according to the tradition received from his fathers. "And even yet," said he, "on a still evening like this, or sometimes when the sea is raging, the ghosts of the departed Egyptians are seen walking upon the waters; and once, when, after a long day's journey, I lay down with my camels on this very spot, I saw the ghost of Pharaoh himself, with the crown

upon his head, flying with his chariot and horses over the face of the deep; and even to this day the Arab, diving for coral, brings up fragments of swords, broken helmets, or chariot-wheels, swallowed up with the host of Egypt."

Early the next morning we resumed our journey, and travelled several hours along a sandy valley, diverging slowly from the sea and approaching the mountains on our left. The day's journey was barren of incident, though not void of interest. We met only one small caravan of Bedouins, with their empty sacks, like the children of Jacob of old, journeying from a land of famine to a land of plenty. From time to time we passed the bones of a camel bleaching on the sand, and once the body of one just dead, his eyes already picked out, and their sockets hollow to the brain. A huge vulture was standing over him, with his long talons fastened in the entrails, his beak and his whole head stained with blood. I drove the horrid bird away; but before I had got out of sight he had again fastened on his prey.

The third day we started at seven o'clock, and after three hours of journeying entered among the mountains of Sinai. The scene was now entirely changed in character; the level expanse of the sandy desert for the wild and rugged mountain-pass. At eleven we came to the fountain of Marah, supposed to be that at which the Israelites rested after their three days' journey from the Red Sea. There is some uncertainty as to the particulars of this journey; the print of their footsteps

did not long remain in the shifting sands; their descendants have long been strangers in the land; and tradition but imperfectly supplies the want of more accurate and enduring records. Of the general fact there is no doubt; no other road from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai has existed since the days of Moses, and there is no part of the world where the face of nature and the natural landmarks have remained so totally unchanged. Then, as now, it was a barren mountainous region, bare of verdure and destitute of streams of living water; so that the Almighty was obliged to sustain his people with manna from heaven and water from the rocks. But travellers have questioned whether this is the fountain of Marah. The Bible account is simple and brief: "They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water; and when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter." Burckhardt objects that the distance is too short for three days' journey, but this cavil is sufficiently answered by others; that the movements of such an immense multitude, of all ages and both sexes, with flocks and cattle, which they must have had for the sacrifices, if for no other purpose, must necessarily have been slow. Besides, supposing the habits of the people to have been the same as we find them now among Orientals, the presumption is rather that they would march slowly, than push on with speed, after the danger of pursuit was over. Time is thought of little consequence by the Arabs, and as the Jews were Arabs, it is probable that the same

was a feature of their character also. At all events, I was disposed to consider this the fountain, and would fain have performed the duty of a pious pilgrim by making my noonday meal at its brink; but, as in the days of Moses, we could not drink of the waters of Marah, "for they were bitter." I do not wonder that the people murmured, for even our camels would not drink of them. The ground around the fountain was white with salt. In about two hours more we came to the valley of Gherondel, a large valley with palm-trees; away at the right, in the mountains, is another spring of water, which Shaw makes the bitter fountain of Moses, the water being also undrinkable.

That night Paul was unwell; and, as it always happened with him when he had a headache, he thought he was going to die. As soon as we pitched our tent I made him lie down; and not knowing exactly how to deal with his real and fancied ailments, gave him some hot tea, and then piled upon him quilts, blankets, empty sacks, saddle-cloths, and every other covering I could find, until he cried for quarter. I had no difficulty in cooking my own supper, and, I remember, tried the savage taste of my Bedouins with the China weed, which they liked exceedingly, when so abundantly sweetened as utterly to destroy the flavour of it.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Aspect of the Mountains.—Arab Graves.—The Pacha and the Bedouins.—The Value of Water.—Perplexing Inscriptions.—Habits of the Arabs.—Ethics of the Desert.—Breach of the Marriage Vow.—Arrival at the Convent.—An Excess of Welcome.—Greece and America.—Amor Patriæ.

In the morning Paul was well, but I recommended a little starvation to make all sure; this, however, by no means agreed with his opinion—or his appetite; for, as he said, a man who rode a dromedary all day must eat or die. Late in the afternoon we passed a hill of stones, which Burckhardt calls the tomb of a saint; but, according to Toualeb's account, and he spoke of it as a thing within his own knowledge, it was the tomb of an entirely different personage, namely, a woman who was surprised by her kindred with a paramour, and killed and buried on the spot; on a little eminence above, a few stones marked the place where a slave had been stationed to give the guilty pair a timely notice of approaching danger, but had neglected his important trust.

Our road now lay between wild and rugged mountains, and the valley itself was stony, broken, and gullied by the washing of the winter torrents; and a few straggling thorn-bushes were all that grew in that region of desolation. I had remarked for some time, and every moment im-

pressed it more and more forcibly upon my mind, that every thing around me seemed old and in decay: the valley was barren and devastated by torrents; the rocks were rent; the mountains cracked, broken, and crumbling into thousands of pieces; and we encamped at night between rocks which seemed to have been torn asunder by some violent convulsion, where the stones had washed down into the valley, and the drifted sand almost choked the passage. It had been excessively hot during the day, and at night the wind was whistling around my tent as in mid-winter.

Early in the morning we were again in motion, our route lying nearly all day in the same narrow valley, bounded by the same lofty mountains. At every step the scene became more solemn and impressive; all was still around us; and not a sound broke the universal silence, except the soft tread of our camels, and now and then the voice of one of us—but there was little encouragement to garrulity. The mountains became more and more striking, venerable, and interesting. Not a shrub or blade of grass grew on their naked sides, deformed with gaps and fissures; and they looked as if by a slight jar or shake they would crumble into millions of pieces. It is impossible to describe correctly the singularly interesting appearance of these mountains. Age, hoary and venerable, is the predominant character. They looked as if their great Creator had made them higher than they are, and their summits, worn and weakened by the action of the elements for thou-

sands of years, had cracked and fallen. My days in the desert did not pass as quickly as I hurry through them here. They wore away, not slowly alone, but sometimes heavily ; and, to help them in their progress, I sometimes descended to very commonplace amusements. On one occasion, I remember, meeting a party of friendly Bedouins, and sitting down with them to pipes and coffee, I noticed a fine lad of nineteen or twenty, about the size of one of my party, and pitted mine against him for a wrestling-match. The old Bedouins took the precaution to remove their knives and swords, and it was well they did, for the two lads throttled each other like young furies ; and when mine received a pretty severe prostration on the sand, he first attempted to regain his sword, and, failing in that, sprang again upon his adversary with such ferocity that I was glad to have the young devils taken apart, and still more glad to know that they were going to travel different roads.

Several times we passed the rude burying-grounds of the Bedouins, standing alone in the waste of sand, a few stones thrown together in a heap marking the spot where an Arab's bones reposed ; but the wanderer of the desert looks forward to his final rest in this wild burying-place of his tribe, with the same feeling that animates the English peasant towards the churchyard of his native village, or the noble peer towards the honoured tomb of his ancestors.

About noon we came to an irregular stone fence,

running across the valley and extending up the sides nearly to the top of the adjacent mountains, built as a wall by the Bedouins of Sinai during their war with the pacha of Egypt. Among the strong and energetic measures of his government, Mohammed Aly had endeavoured to reduce these children of the desert under his iron rule; to subject them to taxes, like his subjects of the Nile, and, worse, to establish his oppressive system of military conscription. But the free spirit of the untameable could not brook this invasion of their independence. They plundered his caravans, drank his best Mocha coffee, devoured his spices from Arabia and India, and clothed themselves and their wives in the rich silks intended for the harems of the wealthy Turks. Hassan Bey was sent against them with 2500 men; 400 Bedouins defended this pass for several days, when, craftily permitting him to force his way to the convent of Mount Sinai, the tribes gathered in force between him and the Red Sea, and held him there a prisoner until a treaty of perpetual amity had been ratified by the pacha, by which it was agreed that the pacha should not invade their territory, and that they would be his subjects, provided he would not call upon them for duties, or soldiers, or, indeed, for any thing which should abridge their natural freedom; or, in other words, that he might do as he pleased with them, provided he did nothing but what suited them. It was, in fact, the schoolboy's bargain, "Let me alone and I will let you alone," and so it has been faithfully kept by both parties, and I have no doubt

will continue to be kept, until one of them shall have a strong probability of profit and success in breaking it. Upon the whole, however, the Bedouins of Mount Sinai are rather afraid of Mohammed Aly, and he has a great rod over them in his power of excluding them from Cairo, where they come to exchange their dates and apricots for grain, clothing, weapons, and ammunition. As they told me themselves, before his time they had been great robbers, and now a robbery is seldom heard of among them.

For two days we had been suffering for want of water. The skins with which I had been provided by the consul's janizary at Cairo were so new that they contaminated the water; and it had at last become so bad, that, fearful of injurious effects from drinking it, and preferring the evil of thirst to that of sickness, I had poured it all out upon the sand. Toualeb had told me that some time during the day we should come to a fountain, but the evening was drawing nigh and we had not reached it. Fortunately, we had still a few oranges left, which served to moisten our parched mouths, and we were in the momentary expectation of coming to the water, when Toualeb discovered some marks, from which he told us that it was yet three hours distant. We had no apprehension of being reduced to the extremity of thirst, but for men who had already been suffering some time, the prolongation of such thirst was by no means pleasant. During those three hours I thought of nothing but water. Rivers were flowing through my imagina-

tion, and while moving slowly upon my dromedary, with the hot sun beating upon my head, I wiped the sweat from my face, and thought upon the frosty Caucasus. And when, after travelling an hour aside from the main track, through an opening in the mountains, we saw a single palm-tree shading a fountain, our progress was gradually accelerated, until, as we approached, we broke into a run, and dashing through the sand, and without much respect of persons, all threw ourselves upon the fountain.

If any of my friends at home could have seen me then, they would have laughed to see me scrambling among a party of Arabs for a place around a fountain, all prostrate on the ground, with our heads together, for a moment raising them to look gravely at each other, while we paused for breath, and then burying our noses again in the delicious water. And yet, when my thirst was satisfied, and I had time to look at it, I thought it lucky that I had not seen it before. It was not a fountain, but merely a deposite of water in a hollow sandstone rock; the surface was green, and the bottom muddy. Such as it was, however, we filled our skins and returned to the main track.

We continued about an hour in the valley, rising gently until we found ourselves on the top of a little eminence, from which we saw before us another valley, bounded also by high rocky cliffs; and directly in front, still more than a day's journey distant, standing directly across the road, and, as has been forcibly and truly said, "looking like the

end of the world," stood the towering mountains of Sinai. At the other end of the plain the mountains contracted, and on one side was an immense block of porphyry, which had fallen, probably, thousands of years ago. I could still see where it had come leaping and crashing down the mountain-side, and trace its destructive course to the very spot where it now lay, itself almost a mountain, though a mere pebble when compared with the giant from which it came. I pitched my tent by its side, with the door open to the holy mountain, as many a weary pilgrim had done before me. The rock was covered with inscriptions; but I could not read them. I walked round and round it with Paul at my elbow, looking eagerly for some small scrap, a single line, in a language we could read; but all were strange, and at length we gave up the search. In several places in the wilderness of Sinai the rocks are filled with inscriptions, supposed to have been made by the Jews; and finding those before me utterly beyond my comprehension, I resolved to carry them back to a respectable antiquity, and in many of the worn and faded characters to recognise the work of some wandering Israelite. I meditated, also, a desperate but noble deed. Those who had written before me were long since dead; but in this lonely desert they had left a record of themselves and of their language. I resolved to add one of my country's also. Dwelling fondly in imagination upon the absorbing interest with which some future traveller, perhaps from my own distant land, would

stop to read on this lonely rock a greeting in his native tongue, I sought with great care a stone that would serve as a pencil. It made a mark which did not suit me, and I laid it down to break it into a better shape, but only smashed my fingers, and in one moment all my enthusiasm of sentiment was gone; I crammed my fingers into my mouth, and danced about the rock in an agony of heroics; and so my inscription remained unwritten.

At seven o'clock of the tenth day from Cairo, I was again on my dromedary, and during the whole day the lofty top of Sinai was constantly before me. We were now in a country of friendly Arabs. The Bedouins around Mount Sinai were all of the same tribe, and the escort of any child of that tribe was a sufficient protection. About nine o'clock Toualeb left me for his tent among the mountains. He was a little at a loss, having two wives living in separate tents, at some distance from each other, and he hesitated which to visit. I made it my business to pry into particulars, and found the substance of the Arab's nature not much different from other men's. Old ties and a sense of duty called him to his old wife—to her who had been his only wife when he was young and poor; but something stronger than old ties or the obligation of duty impelled him to his younger bride. Like the Prophet whom he worshipped, he honoured and respected his old wife, but his heart yearned to her younger and more lovely rival.

The last was by far the most interesting day of my journey to Mount Sinai. We were moving

along a broad valley, bounded by ranges of lofty and crumbling mountains, forming an immense rocky rampart on each side of us; and rocky and barren as these mountains seemed, on their tops were gardens which produced oranges, dates, and figs in great abundance. Here, on heights almost inaccessible to any but the children of the desert, the Bedouin pitches his tent, pastures his sheep and goats, and gains the slender subsistence necessary for himself and family; and often, looking up the bare side of the mountain, we could see on its summit's edge the wild figure of a half-naked Arab, with his long matchlock gun in his hand, watching the movement of our little caravan. Sometimes, too, the eye rested upon the form of a woman stealing across the valley, not a traveller or passer-by, but a dweller in the land where no smoke curled from the domestic hearth, and no sign of a habitation was perceptible. There was something very interesting to me in the greetings of my companions with the other young men of their tribe. They were just returning from a journey to Cairo, an event in the life of a young Bedouin; and they were bringing a stranger from a land that none of them had ever heard of; yet their greeting had the coldness of frosty age and the reserve of strangers; twice they would gently touch the palms of each other's hands, mutter a few words, and in a moment the welcomers were again climbing to their tents. One, I remember, greeted us more warmly and stayed longer among us. He was by profession a beggar or robber, as occasion required, and wanted

something from us, but it was not much; merely some bread and a charge of powder. Not far from the track we saw, hanging on a thorn-bush, the black cloth of a Bedouin's tent, with the pole, ropes, pegs, and every thing necessary to convert it into a habitation for a family. It had been there six months; the owner had gone to a new pasture-ground, and there it had hung, and there it would hang, sacred and untouched, until he returned to claim it. "It belongs to one of our tribe, and cursed be the hand that touches it," is the feeling of every Bedouin. Uncounted gold might be exposed in the same way, and the poorest Bedouin, though a robber by birth and profession, would pass by and touch it not.

On the very summit of the mountain, apparently ensconced behind it as a wall, his body not more than half visible, a Bedouin was looking down upon us, and one of my party, who had long kept his face turned that way, told me that there was the tent of his father. I talked with him about his kindred and his mountain home, not expecting, however, to discover any thing of extraordinary interest or novelty. The sons of Ishmael have ever been the same, inhabitants of the desert, despising the dwellers under a roof, wanderers and wild men from their birth, with their hands against every man, and every man's hand against them. "There is blood between us," says the Bedouin when he meets in the desert one of a tribe, by some individual of which an ancestor of his own was killed, perhaps a hundred years before. And then they

draw their swords, and a new account of blood is opened, to be handed down as a legacy to their children. "Thy aunt wants thy purse," says the Bedouin, when he meets the stranger travelling through his wild domain. "The desert is ours, and every man who passes over it must pay us tribute." These principal and distinguishing traits of the Bedouin character have long been known; but as I had now been with them ten days, and expected to be with them a month longer, to see them in their tents, and be thrown among different tribes, claiming friendship from those who were enemies to each other, I was curious to know something of the lighter shades, the details of their lives and habits; and I listened with exceeding interest while the young Bedouin, with his eyes constantly fixed upon it, told me that for more than four hundred years the tent of his fathers had been in that mountain. Wild and unsettled, robbers and plunderers as they are, they have laws which are as sacred as our own; and the tent, and the garden, and the little pasture-ground, are transmitted from father to son for centuries. I have probably forgotten more than half of our conversation; but I remember he told me that all the sons shared equally; that the daughters took nothing; that the children lived together; that if any of the brothers got married, the property must be divided; that if any difficulty arose on the division, the man who worked the place for a share of the profits must divide it; and, lastly, that the sisters must remain with the brothers until they (the sisters) are mar-

ried. I asked him, if the brothers did not choose to keep a sister with them, what became of her; but he did not understand me. I repeated the question, but still he did not comprehend it, and looked to his companions for an explanation. And when, at last, the meaning of my question became apparent to his mind, he answered, with a look of wonder, "It is impossible—she is his own blood." I pressed my question again and again in various forms, suggesting the possibility that the brother's wife might dislike the sister, and other very supposable cases; but it was so strange an idea, that to the last he did not fully comprehend it, and his answer was still the same—"It is impossible—she is his own blood." Paul was in ecstasies at the noble answers of the young savage, and declared him the finest fellow he had ever met since he left Cairo. This was not very high praise, to be sure; but Paul intended it as a compliment, and the young Bedouin was willing to believe him, though he could not exactly comprehend how Paul had found it out.

I asked him who governed them; he stretched himself up and answered in one word, "God." I asked him if they paid tribute to the pacha; and his answer was, "No, we take tribute from him." I asked him how. "We plunder his caravans." Desirous to understand my exact position with the sheik of Akaba, under his promise of protection, I asked him if they were governed by their sheik; to which he answered, "No, we govern him." The sheik was their representative,

their mouthpiece with the pacha and with other tribes, and had a personal influence, but not more than any other member of the tribe. I asked him, if the sheik had promised a stranger to conduct him through his territory, whether the tribe would not consider themselves bound by his promise. He said no; they would take the sheik apart, ask him what he was going to do with the stranger; how much he was going to get; and if they were satisfied would let him pass; otherwise they would send him back; but they would respect the promise of the sheik so far as not to do him any personal injury. In case of any quarrel or difference between members of a tribe, they had no law or tribunal to adjust it; but if one of them was wounded—and he spoke as if this was the regular consequence of a quarrel—upon his recovery he made out his account, charging a per diem price for the loss of his services, and the other must pay it. But what if he will not? "He *must*," was the reply, given in the same tone with which he had before pronounced it "impossible" for the brother to withhold protection and shelter from his sister. If he does not he will be visited with the contempt of his tribe, and very soon he or one of his near relations will be killed. They have a law which is as powerful in its operations as any that we have, and it is a strange and not uninteresting feature in their social compact, that what we call public opinion should be as powerful among them as among civilized people, and that even the wild and lawless Bedouin, a man who

may fight, rob, and kill with impunity, cannot live under the contempt of his tribe.

In regard to their yet more domestic habits, he told me that though the law of Mohammed allowed four wives, the Bedouin seldom took more than one, unless that one was barren or could not make good bread, or unless he fell in love with another girl, or could afford to keep more than one; with these and some few other extraordinary exceptions, the Bedouin married but one wife; and the chastity of women was protected by sanguinary laws, the guilty woman having her head cut off by her own relations, while her paramour, unless caught in the act, is allowed to escape; the Arabs proceeding on the ground that the chastity of the woman is a pearl above all price; that it is in her own keeping; and that it is but part of the infirmity of man's nature to seek to rob her of it.

The whole day we were moving between parallel ranges of mountains, receding in some places, and then again contracting, and at about mid-day entered a narrow and rugged defile, bounded on each side with precipitous granite rocks more than 1000 feet high. We entered at the very bottom of this defile, moving for a time along the dry bed of a torrent, now obstructed with sand and stones, the rocks on every side shivered and torn, and the whole scene wild to sublimity. Our camels stumbled among the rocky fragments to such a degree that we dismounted, and passed through the wild defile on foot. At the other end we came suddenly upon a plain table of ground, and before us

towered in awful grandeur, so huge and dark that it seemed close to us and barring all farther progress, the end of my pilgrimage, the holy mountain of Sinai. On our left was a large insulated stone, rudely resembling a chair, called the chair of Moses, on which tradition says that Moses rested himself when he came up with the people under his charge; farther on, upon a little eminence, are some rude stones which are pointed out as the ruins of the house of Aaron, where the great high-priest discoursed to the wandering Israelites. On the right is a stone, alleged to be the petrified golden calf. But it was not necessary to draw upon false and frivolous legends to give interest to this scene; the majesty of nature was enough. I felt that I was on holy ground, and, dismounting from my dromedary, loitered for more than an hour in the valley. It was cold, and I sent my shivering Bedouins forward, supposing myself to be at the foot of the mountain, and lingered there until after the sun had set. It was after dark as alone, and on foot, I entered the last defile leading to the holy mountain. The moon had risen, but her light could not penetrate the deep defile through which I was toiling slowly on to the foot of Sinai. From about half way up it shone with a pale and solemn lustre, while below all was in the deepest shade, and a dark spot on the side of the mountain, seeming perfectly black in contrast with the light above it, marked the situation of the convent. I passed a Bedouin tent, under which a group of Arabs were sleeping

around a large fire, and in a few moments stood at the foot of the convent wall. My camels were lying down eating their evening meal, and my Bedouins were asleep on the ground close under the walls.

Knowing that they would not be admitted themselves, they had not demanded entrance; and as I had not told them to do so, they had not given notice of my coming. The convent was a very large building, and the high stone walls surrounding it, with turrets at the corners, gave it the appearance of a fortress. Exposed as they are to occasional attacks by the Bedouins, the holy fathers are sometimes obliged to have recourse to carnal weapons. The walls are accordingly mounted with cannon, and there is no entrance except by a subterraneous passage under the garden, or by a small door in one of the walls, about thirty feet from the ground. My Bedouins had stopped under this door, and here we commenced shouting for admission, first singly, and then all together, in French, English, and Arabic; but no one came to admit us. I was strongly reminded of the scene under the walls of the little convent in the desert, on my attempted expedition to the great Oasis. Then, as now, it was a moonlight night, and the scene was a convent, a lonely habitation of Christians, with its door closed against a fellow-*Christian*. I remembered that then I had to force my way in and make my own welcome, and I resolved that no trifle should keep me from an entrance here. The convent belonged to the Greek church.

I did not know how many monks were in it, or what was the sanctity of their lives, but I wished that some of them had slept with more troubled consciences, for we made almost noise enough to wake the dead; and it was not until we had discharged two volleys of firearms that we succeeded in rousing any of the slumbering inmates. On one side were two or three little slits or portholes, and a monk, with a long white beard, and a lighted taper in his hand, cautiously thrust out his head at one of them, and demanded our business. This was soon told; we were strangers and Christians, and wanted admission; and had a letter from the Greek patriarch at Cairo. The head disappeared from the loophole, and soon after I saw its owner slowly open the little door, and let down a rope for the patriarch's letter. He read it by the feeble glimmer of his lamp, and then again appeared at the window, and bade us welcome. The rope was again let down; I tied it around my arms; and after dangling in the air for a brief space, swinging to and fro against the walls, found myself clasped in the arms of a burly, long-bearded monk, who hauled me in, kissed me on both cheeks, our long beards rubbing together in friendly union, and untwisting the rope, set me upon my feet, and passed me over to his associates.

By this time nearly all the monks had assembled; and all pressed forward to welcome me. They shook my hand, took me in their arms, and kissed my face; and if I had been their dearest friend just escaped from the jaws of death, they

could not have received me with a more cordial greeting. Glad as I was, after a ten days' journey, to be received with such warmth by these recluses of the mountains, I could have spared the kissing. The custom is one of the detestable things of the East. It would not be so bad if it were universal, and the traveller might sometimes receive his welcome from rosy lips; but, unhappily, the women hide their faces and run away from a stranger, while the men rub him with their bristly beards. At first I went at it with a stout heart, flattering myself that I could give as well as take; but I soon flinched and gave up. Their beards were the growth of years; while mine had only a few months to boast of, and its downward aspirations must continue many a long day before it would attain the respectable longitude of theirs.

During the kissing scene, a Bedouin servant came from the other end of the terrace, with an armful of burning brush, and threw it in a blaze upon the stony floor. The monks were gathered around, talking to me and uttering assurances of welcome, as I knew them to be, although I could not understand them; and, confused and almost stunned with their clamorous greeting, I threw myself on the floor, thrust my feet in the fire, and called out for *Paul*. Twice the rope descended and brought up my tent, baggage, &c.; and the third time it brought up Paul, hung round with guns, pistols, and swords, like a travelling battery. The rope was wound up by a windlass, half a dozen monks, in long black frocks with white

stripes, turning it with all their might. In the general eagerness to help, they kept on turning until they had carried Paul above the window, and brought his neck up short under the beam, his feet struggling to hold on to the sill of the door. He roared out lustily in Greek and Arabic; and while they were helping to disencumber him of his multifarious armour, he was cursing and berating them for a set of blundering workmen, who had almost broken the neck of as good a Christian as any among them. Probably, since the last incursion of the Bedouins, the peaceful walls of the convent had not been disturbed by such an infernal clatter.

The monks had been roused from sleep, and some of them were hardly yet awake; the superior was the last who came, and his presence quickly restored order. He was a remarkably noble-looking old man, of more than sixty. He asked me my country, and called me his child, and told me that God would reward me for coming from so distant a land to do homage on the holy mountain; and I did not deny the character he ascribed to me, or correct his mistake in supposing that the motive of my journey was purely religious; and, looking upon me as a devout pilgrim, he led me through a long range of winding passages, which seemed like the streets of a city, into a small room spread with mats, having a pile of coverlets in one corner, and wearing an appearance of comfort that could be fully appreciated by one who had then spent ten nights in the desert. I threw myself

on the mats with a feeling of gratitude, while the superior renewed his welcome, telling me that the convent was the pilgrim's home, and that every thing it contained was mine for a week, a month, or the rest of my days. Nor did he neglect my immediate wants, but, with all the warmth and earnestness of a man who could feel for others' woes in so important a matter as eating, expressed his regret that meat was always a forbidden thing within the walls of the convent, and that now, during their forty days of fasting, even fish and eggs were proscribed. I told him that I was an invalid, and wanted only the plainest and simplest viands, but insinuated that speed was of more importance than richness of fare, having eaten only a biscuit and an orange since morning. The cook of the convent, however, a lay brother in his novitiate, was not used to do things in a hurry, and before he was ready I felt myself goaded by the fiend of famine; and when he came with a platter of beans and a smoking pilau of rice, I made such an attack upon them as made the good superior stare with wonder and admiration; and I have no doubt that, before I had done, he must have thought a few more such invalids would bring him and the whole brotherhood to actual starvation.

The superior was a Greek by birth, and though it was forty years since he had first come to the convent at Sinai, and twenty years since he entered it for the last time, he was still a Greek in heart. His relations with his native land were kept up by the occasional visits of pilgrims. He

had heard of her bloody struggle for liberty, and of what America had done for her in her hour of need, and he told me that, next to his own country, he loved mine; and by his kindness to me as an individual, he sought to repay, in part, his country's debt of gratitude. In my wanderings in Greece, I had invariably found the warmest feeling towards my country. I had found it in the offices of government, in my boatmen, my muleteer, and I remember a ploughman on immortal Marathon sang in my greedy ears the praises of America. I had seen the tear stream down the manly cheeks of a mustached Greek when he talked of America. I had seen those who had received directly from the hands of my countrymen the bounty that came from home. One, I remember, pointed me to a family of sons and daughters, who, he told me, were saved from absolute starvation by our timely help; and so dearly was our country loved there, that I verily believe the mountain robber would have spared the unprotected American.

I knew that this feeling existed in Greece, but I did not expect to find it thus glowing in the wilderness of Sinai. For myself, different in this respect from most other travellers, I liked the Greeks. Travellers and strangers condemn the whole people as dishonest, because they are cheated by their boatmen or muleteers, without ever thinking of their four centuries of bitter servitude; but when I remembered their long oppression and galling chains, instead of wondering that they were so bad, I wondered that they were not worse. I

liked the Greeks ; and when I talked of Greece and what I had seen there, of the Bavarians lording it over the descendants of Cimon and Miltiades, the face of the superior flushed and his eyes flashed fire ; and when I spoke of the deep interest their sufferings and their glorious struggle had created in America, the old man wept. Oh, who can measure the feeling that binds a man to his native land ! Though forty years an exile, buried in the wilderness, and neither expecting nor wishing to revisit the world, he loved his country as if his foot now pressed her soil, and under his monkish robe there glowed a heart as patriotic as ever beat beneath a soldier's corslet. The reader will excuse an unusual touch of sensibility in me when he reflects upon my singular position, sitting at the base of Mount Sinai, and hearing from the lips of a white-bearded Greek the praises of my beloved country. He sat with me till the ringing of the midnight bell for prayers, when I threw myself upon the mat, and before the hollow sounds had died away in the cloisters, I was fast asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

Ascent of Sinai.—A Miracle.—The Grotto of Elias.—A Monkish Legend.—The Pinnacle of Sinai.—Anchorites.—Mohammed and his Camel.—An Argument.—Legend of St. Catharine.—The Rock of the Tables.—The Stone struck by Moses.—Description of the Convent.—Habits and Character of its Inmates.

The next day was one of the most interesting of my life. At eight o'clock I was breakfasting; the superior was again at my side; again offering me all the convent could give, and urging me to stay a month, a fortnight, a week, at least to spend that day with him, and repose myself after the fatigues of my journey; but from the door of the little room in which I sat I saw the holy mountain, and I longed to stand on its lofty summit. Though feeble and far from well, I felt the blood of health again coursing in my veins, and congratulated myself that I was not so hackneyed in feeling as I had once supposed. I found, and I was happy to find, for the prospective enjoyment of my farther journey, that the first tangible monument in the history of the Bible, the first spot that could be called holy ground, raised in me feelings that had not been awakened by the most classic ground of Italy and Greece, or the proudest monuments of the arts in Egypt.

Immediately after breakfast I rose to ascend the mountain. The superior conducted me through

the convent, which, even more than at night, seemed like a small city, through long galleries built of stone, with iron doors, and finally through a long subterraneous passage to the outer garden, a beautiful spot in the midst of the surrounding barrenness, now blooming with almonds and oranges, lemons, dates, and apricots, and shaded by arbours of grape-vines to the extreme end of the walls. At this moment I gave but a passing glance at the garden, and hurrying on to the walls, where a trusty Arab was sitting as sentinel, I descended by a rope, the superior, or papa, as he is called, bidding me farewell, and telling me not to fatigue myself or be long away. At the foot of the wall I found Toualeb waiting orders for my final departure. He said that he must consult with his tribe before he could make any bargain; and I told him to come to the convent in two days, prepared to start upon the third.

Immediately behind the wall of the convent we began to ascend. A Bedouin dwarf, the first specimen of deformity I had seen among the Arabs, led the way, with a leather bag of refreshments on his back. Sophronie, an old monk, followed, with long white hair and beard, supporting himself by a staff; after him came a young novice from Corfu, who spoke Italian, and then Paul and myself. For some time the ascent was easy. Ever since the establishment of the convent, it had been the business of the monks to improve the path to the top of the mountain; and for about twenty minutes we continued ascending by regular steps. In half an

hour we came to a beautiful fountain under an overhanging rock. Besides the hallowed localities in and around the mountain, consecrated by scenes of Bible history, almost every spot has some monkish legend, of which that connected with the fountain is a specimen. Taking a long draught from its stony bed, our younger companion began the story somewhat in the usual Eastern form. "Once there was a poor shoemaker" who, in making his pilgrimage to the holy mountain, on a hot day, sat down under the shade of the impending rock. He was an industrious man, and while resting himself took out his cobbling materials, and began to cobble; he was a good man, and while he sat there at his work, he thought of the wickedness of the world and its temptations, and how the devil was always roaming about after poor cobblers, and resolved to quit the world for ever, and live under that rock. There was no water near it then; but as soon as he had made this resolution the water gushed forth, and a living fountain has remained there ever since. The same year there was a dispute between the Greek and Armenian patriarchs at Cairo, and the pacha gave notice that he would decide in favour of him who should perform a miracle. This was more than either had power to do; but the Greek dreamed one night of the poor cobbler, and the next morning despatched a messenger to the mountain with a dromedary, and a request that the holy man should come and perform a miracle. The cobbler was a modest man, and said he would be glad to make a pair of shoes for

the patriarch, but could not perform a miracle. The messenger, however, insisted upon taking him to Cairo, where, roused into a belief of his own powers, he ordered a mountain to approach the city. The obedient mountain marched till it was told to stop; and there it stands to the present day.

In half an hour more we came to a little chapel dedicated to the Virgin, to which, some two or three hundred years ago, certain holy men, who wished to separate themselves more completely from the world, had withdrawn from the convent, and here lived and died upon the mountain. The chapel had been fitted up several times, but the Bedouins had always entered and destroyed every thing it contained. The situation was well suited for retirement—quiet and isolated, but not dreary, and fitted for a calm and contemplative spirit. Paul was particularly struck with it, and in a moment of enthusiasm said he would like to end his days there; and, with his characteristic prudence, asked if he could get his meals from the convent. The monk did not approve his enthusiasm, and told him that his inspiration was of the devil and not of God, but suddenly said that there were no hermits now; that all men thought too much of eating and drinking, and indulging in luxuries; sighed, kissed the cross, asked Paul for a cigar, and then walked on again. Passing through a defile of precipitous rocks, we soon reached a gate about three feet wide, where formerly, when pilgrimages to this place were more frequent, a guard was stationed, to whom it was necessary to show a permission

from the superior of the convent. A little beyond this was another narrow passage secured by a door, where it was formerly necessary to show a pass from the keeper of the gate, and where a dozen men could make a good defence against a thousand. Soon after, we entered a large open space, forming a valley surrounded on all sides by mountains; and on the left, high above the others, rose the lofty peak of Sinai. It is this part of the mountain which bears the sacred name of Horeb. In the centre, enclosed by a stone fence, is a tall cypress, the only tree on the mountain, planted by the monks more than a hundred years ago. Near it is a fountain, called the fountain of Elias, which the prophet dug with his own hands when he lived in the mountain, before he was ordered by the Lord to Jerusalem. According to the monks, the prophet is still living somewhere in the world, wandering about with Enoch, and preparing for the great final battle with Antichrist. A little above is an old church with strong walls and iron doors, now falling and dilapidated, and containing a grotto, called the grotto of Elias, which, according to the legend, formed the prophet's sleeping-chamber.

I crawled into the rocky cell, and, thanks to my travelling experience, which had taught me not to be fastidious in such matters, found the bedroom of the prophet by no means an uncomfortable place; often in the desert I would have been thankful for such a shelter. Here our dwarf left us, and, continuing our ascent, the old monk still leading the way, in about a quarter of an hour came to a

table of rock standing boldly out, and running down almost perpendicularly an immense distance to the valley. I was expecting another monkish legend, and my very heart thrilled when the monk told me that this was the top of the hill on which Moses had sat during the battle of the Israelites and the Amalekites, while Aaron and Hur supported his uplifted hands, until the sun went down upon the victorious arms of his people. From the height I could see, clearly and distinctly, every part of the battle-ground, and the whole vale of Rephidim and the mountains beyond; and Moses, while on this spot, must have been visible to the contending armies from every part of the field on which they were engaged.

Some distance farther on the old monk stopped, and, prostrating himself before a stone, kissed it devoutly, and then told me its history. He said that the last time the monks in the convent were beset by the Arabs, when their communication with Cairo was cut off, and death by the sword or famine staring them in the face, the superior proposed that they should put on their holiest vestments, and, under the sacred banner of the cross, ascend in a body, and, for the last time, sing their Te Deum on the top of the mountain. On their return, at this stone they met a woman with a child, who told them that all their danger was over; and in accordance with her words, when they returned to the convent, they found the Arabs gone, and forty camels from Cairo laden with provisions standing

under the walls. Since that time they had never been molested by the Arabs, "and there is no doubt," continued the old monk, "that the woman was the mother of God, and the child the Saviour of the world."

But away with monkish superstition. I stand upon the very peak of Sinai—where Moses stood when he talked with the Almighty. Can it be, or is it a mere dream? Can this naked rock have been the witness of that great interview between man and his Maker? where, amid thunder and lightning, and a fearful quaking of the mountain, the Almighty gave to his chosen people the precious tables of his law, those rules of infinite wisdom and goodness, which, to this day, best teach man his duty towards his God, his neighbour, and himself?

The scenes of many of the incidents recorded in the Bible are extremely uncertain. Historians and geographers place the Garden of Eden, the paradise of our first parents, in different parts of Asia; and they do not agree upon the site of the tower of Babel, the mountain of Ararat, and many of the most interesting places in the Holy Land; but of Sinai there is no doubt. This is the holy mountain; and among all the stupendous works of Nature, not a place can be selected more fitted for the exhibition of Almighty power. I have stood upon the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it, upon the bold scenery of Sicily, and the distant mountains of Cala-

bria; upon the top of Vesuvius, and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half-recovered cities at its foot; but they are nothing compared with the terrific solitudes and bleak majesty of Sinai. An observing traveller has well called it "a perfect sea of desolation." Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies, while the crumbling masses of granite all around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate picture that imagination can conceive.

The level surface of the very top, or pinnacle, is about sixty feet square. At one end is a single rock about twenty feet high, on which, as said the monk, the spirit of God descended, while in the crevice beneath his favoured servant received the tables of the law. There, on the same spot where they were given, I opened the sacred book in which those laws are recorded, and read them with a deeper feeling of devotion, as if I were standing nearer and receiving them more directly from the Deity himself.

The ruins of a church and convent are still to be seen upon the mountain, to which, before the convent below was built, monks and hermits used to retire, and, secluded from the world, sing the praises of God upon his chosen hill. Near this, also in ruins, stands a Mohammedan mosque; for

on this sacred spot the followers of Christ and Mohammed have united in worshipping the true and living God. Under the chapel is a hermit's cell, where, in the iron age of fanaticism, the anchorite lingered out his days in fasting, meditation, and prayer.

In the East, the fruitful parent of superstition, occurred the first instances of monastic life. A single enthusiast withdrew himself from the society of his fellow-men, and wandered for years among the rocks and sands of the desert, devoting himself to the service of his Maker by the mistaken homage of bodily mortification. The deep humility of the wanderer, his purity and sincerity, and the lashes and stripes he inflicted upon his worn and haggard body, excited the warm imaginations of the Christians of the East. Others, tortured by the same overpowering consciousness of sin, followed his example, emulating each other in self-punishment; and he was accounted the most holy, and the most worthy to be received at the right hand of God, who showed himself most dead to all the natural feelings of humanity. The deserts of the Thebaid were soon covered with hermits; and more than 70,000 anchorites were wasting their lives in the gloomy wilds of Sinai, startling the solitude with the cries of their self-inflicted torture. The ruins of their convents are still to be seen upon the rudest mountain side, in the most savage chasm, or upon the craggiest top; and, strange as the feeling may seem, my very soul

Gumbert, sc.

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cleaved to the scene around me. I too felt myself lifted above the world, and its petty cares and troubles, and almost hurried into the wild enthusiasm which had sent the tenants of these ruined convents to live and die among the mountains.

Blame me not, reader, nor think me impious, that with such impressions, on the top of the holy mountain of Sinai, half unconscious what I did, I fired at a partridge. The sound of my gun, ringing in frequent echoes from the broken and hollow rocks, startled and aroused me; and chasing the bird down the mountain side, I again reached "the place in Horeb," and threw myself on the ground under the palm-tree, near the fountain of Elias.

I always endeavoured to make my noonday meal near some rock or ruin, some tree or fountain; and I could not pass by the fountain of the prophet. My Arab dwarf had anticipated my wants; and now prepared some of the genuine Mocha, which every Arabian (and an Arabian only) knows how to prepare, exhaling an aroma that refreshes and invigorates the wearied frame; and, in the desert, a cordial more precious than the finest wines of France or Madeira. Seated under the palm-tree, monks, Bedouins, Paul, and myself, all together, eating our frugal meal of bread and fruit, accompanied with long draughts from the fountain of Elias, I talked with the Bedouins about the mountain, consecrated in the eyes of all true Mussulmans by the legend of Mohammed and his camel.

In one respect I was very unlucky in this jour-

ney. I had no guide-books. Having formed no definite plan in my wanderings, I never knew with what books to provide myself, and therefore carried none, trusting to chance for finding what I wanted. As might be supposed, when I needed them most it was utterly impossible to obtain any; and from the borders of Egypt to the confines of the Holy Land, I was in some measure groping in the dark; the Bible was my only guide; and though the best a man could have in his pilgrimage through life, and far better than any other in this particular journey, yet others would have been exceedingly valuable, as illustrating obscure passages in the sacred book; and particularly as referring, besides, to circumstances and traditions other than scriptural, connected with the holy mountain.

In the book of one of the modern travellers, I believe of the lamented Burckhardt, I remembered to have seen a reference to a tradition among the Mussulmans, that Mohammed had ascended the mountain on the back of his camel, and from its lofty summit had taken his departure to the seventh heaven, and that the prints of the beast's footsteps were still to be seen on the surface of the rock. I questioned the Arab about this story. In the more engrossing interest of the scene, I had forgotten to look for the prints of the camel's feet, and told him, with great truth, that I had examined every thing carefully, but had not seen them. The old monk, who had sat quietly munching his bread and figs, scandalized at my inquiring into

such a profane story, and considering the holy mountain in a manner his property, broke out unceremoniously, and denounced it as a wicked invention of the Arabs, averring that everybody knew that, before Mohammed got half way up, the camel stumbled, fell, and broke the neck of the Prophet. This was equally new and monstrous to the Arab, who swore that the legend was true, for it was written in the Koran, and that he himself had often seen the print of the foot; and he accounted for my not seeing it, by the very sensible and satisfactory explanation that it was visible only to the eyes of true believers. The good father was completely roused by this obstinate persistance in the scandal; and a reckless Bedouin and an old Bulgarian monk, sitting by a fountain among the deserts of Sinai, were soon disputing with as much clamour and bitterness as if they had been brought up in the midst of civilization, to harangue from opposing pulpits the preachers of the promises, and the denouncers of the curses of rival churches. One thing the pious father especially insisted on—the strong point in his argument, and particularly ludicrous, as coming from such an old bundle of superstitions—was the impossibility of a camel's foot making an impression on stone; and, judging from this alone, one might have suspected him of having had in his youth some feeble glimmerings of common sense; but a few minutes after he told me the legend of Mount St. Catharine.

Mount St. Catharine is the great rival of Sinai in the range of mountains in the Arabian peninsula.

They rise like giant twin brothers, towering above every other; and the only thing which detracts in the slightest degree from the awful supremacy of Sinai, is the fact that Mount St. Catharine is somewhat the highest. The legend is, that in the early days of the Christian church, the daughter of a king of Alexandria became converted. While her father remained a pagan, she tried to convert him; but, indignant at the attempt, he cast her in prison, where she was visited by the Saviour, who entered through the keyhole, and married her with a ring which is now in the hands of the Emperess of Russia. Her father cut her head off, and angels carried her body to the top of the mountain and laid it on the rock. For centuries no one knew where it was deposited, the Christians believing that it had been carried up into heaven, until about two centuries ago, when a monk at the convent dreamed where it had been laid. The next morning he took his staff and climbed to the top of the mountain; and there, on the naked rock, fresh and blooming as in youthful beauty, after a death of more than a thousand years, he found the body of the saint. The monks then went up in solemn procession, and taking up the body, bore it in pious triumph to the convent below, where it now lies in a coffin with a silver lid, near the great altar in the chapel, and receives the homage of all pious pilgrims.

It was nearly dark when I returned to the convent; and in no small degree fatigued with the labours of the day, I again threw myself upon the mat

and welcomed rest. In the evening the superior came to my room, and again we mingled the names of Greece and America. I was weary, and talked with the old man when I would rather have been asleep; but with his own hands he drew mats and cushions around me, and made me so comfortable, that I could not refuse to indulge him with the rare luxury of conversation on the subject of his native land, and of the world from which he was shut out for ever. He was single-hearted and simple, or, perhaps I should rather say, simple and ignorant; I remember, for instance, when we had been embarrassed for a time by the absence of the younger monk who served as our interpreter, the old man told me very gravely, and as a new thing, which I could not be expected to know, but which he did not think the less of me for not knowing, that formerly, in the time of Adam, all mankind spoke but one tongue; and that men became wicked, and built a tower to reach to heaven (he had forgotten its name), and that God had destroyed it and confounded the impious builders with a variety of tongues. I expressed my astonishment as in duty bound, and denounced, in good set terms, the wickedness of our fathers, which now prevented us from enjoying at our ease the sweets of friendly converse.

Before breakfast the next morning he was with me again, with a striped abbas over his black gown, and a staff in his hand, prepared to accompany me outside the walls. I was surprised. He had told me that he had not left the convent for

more than three years, when he had accompanied a great apostolic vicar, holding a distinguished situation in the church of France; and this was the last and only time he had ever bestowed such attention on a stranger. The kind-hearted old man intended it as an act of extraordinary kindness; I received it as such; and as such he told me I could mention it to my friends in America. Humble and unimportant as was that old monk in the great drama of life, I felt proud of his kindness—prouder than I should have been of a reception at a European court, or a greeting from royal lips—and my pride was the greater that I did not ascribe it to any merits of my own. My only claim was that possessed by all my countrymen—I was an American; my country had heard the cry of his in her distress, and from her seat across the broad Atlantic had answered that cry.

We passed, as before, through the subterraneous passages into the garden. The miserable Bedouins who were gathered around outside, waiting for the bread which they received daily from the convent, surprised at the unexpected but welcome appearance of the superior, gathered around him and kissed his hands and the hem of his garment. He had provided himself with an extra sack of bread, which he distributed among them, and which they seemed to receive with peculiar pleasure from his hands. The monks of Mount Sinai are now no longer obliged to have recourse to carnal weapons for protection; peace reigns between them and the Bedouins; and part of the price

of peace is the distribution of 2500 rolls of bread among the poor around the mountain. I did not think so much of this price when I saw the bread, hard, black, and mouldy, and such as the meanest beggar in our country would not accept from the hand of charity. But the Bedouins took it, and thanked God and the monks for it.

Hurrying away from these grateful pensioners, we descended by the defile through which we had entered; and again passing the ruins of the house of Aaron, and the spot from which he preached to the assembled people, we came to a long flat stone, with a few holes indented in its surface; which the superior pointed out as that on which Moses threw down and broke the tablets of the law, when he descended from the mountain and found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. About half an hour farther on was another stone much holier than this; at first I understood the interpreter that it was the petrifaction of the golden calf, but gathered, with some difficulty, from the superior, that it was the mould in which the head of the golden calf was run. He pointed out to me the prints of the head, ears, and horns, clear even to the eyes of a man of sixty; and told me the story of the golden calf, somewhat differently from the Bible account. He said that the people, wanting another god, came up with one accord and threw their golden ornaments upon that stone, and agreed by acclamation that when it was melted they would worship whatever should come

out; three times it came out the head of a calf; and then they fell down and worshipped it.

Some distance farther on we passed on our right a Hebrew burying-ground; "The burial-place," said the superior, "of the Israelites who died in their forty years wandering among the mountains of Sinai." The old man had heard these things so long, and had told them so often, and believed them so firmly, that it would have broken his heart—besides shaking his confidence in my Christian principles—if I had intimated the slightest doubt. I asked whether the Jews ever came in pilgrimage to the mountain of their fathers; and he told me that four years ago, two Asiatic Jews had come disguised as Europeans, and attempted to pass themselves as Christians, "but," said the priest, with a vindictive spirit lighting his usually mild eye, "I detected them under their sheep's clothing, and they did not stay long in the convent." Yet I remember seeing on the wall of the convent, and with no small degree of interest, the name of an American Jew.

Farther on, turning into a valley which opened between the mountains on the left, we came to a garden belonging to the convent, which presented a strange appearance in the midst of the surrounding desolation, producing all kinds of fruits; where one might almost wonder to see a blade of grass put forth, the orange, the date, the fig, and the vine are growing in rich luxuriance. The soil is formed from the débris of rocks washed from the mountains, and though too light for strong pro-

ducts, for fruit it is better than the rich valley of the Nile. Sitting under the shade of a fig-tree, the superior pointed out to me a rent in the mountain opposite, which he said was caused by an earthquake, that had swallowed up two friends and servants of Moses of whom I had never heard before; and who were so swallowed up for disobeying the orders of their earthly master.

The superior, unused to such a task as he had imposed upon himself, here completely gave out, and I left him panting under the shade of his fig-tree, while I went on to the valley of Rephidim; and, passing another garden, came to the rock of Horeb, the stone which Moses struck with his rod, and caused the waters to gush out. The stone is about twelve feet high, and on one side are eight or ten deep gashes from one to three feet long, and from one to two inches wide, some of which were trickling with water. These gashes are singular in their appearance, though probably showing only the natural effect of time and exposure. They look something like the gashes in the bark of a growing tree, except that, instead of the lips of the gash swelling and growing over, they are worn and reduced to a polished smoothness. They are, no doubt, the work of men's hands, a clumsy artifice of the early monks to touch the hearts of pious pilgrims; but the monks of the convent, and the Greek pilgrims who go there now, believe in it with as much honesty and sincerity as in the crucifixion.

Will the reader forgive me if I say that the

rock had in my eyes an interest scarcely less than that which the rod of Moses gave it? Three names were written on it: one of a German, the second of an Englishman, and the third of my early friend, the same which I had seen above the Cataracts of the Nile. When, a few years since, he bade me farewell in my native city, little did I think that I afterward should trace him beyond the borders of Egypt, and through the wilderness of Sinai, to his grave in Jerusalem.

Again I wrote my name under his, and, returning by the way I came, found the superior still sitting under the fig-tree, and, moving on, we soon reached the convent. He hurried away to his official duties, and I retired to my room. I stayed there three or four hours, poring over the scriptural account of the scenes that hallowed the wilderness of Sinai, with an attention that no sound disturbed. Indeed, the stillness of the convent was at all times most extraordinary; day or night not a sound was to be heard but the tolling of the bell for prayers, or occasionally the soft step of a monk stealing through the cloisters.

In the afternoon I lounged around the interior of the convent. The walls form an irregular quadrangle, of about one hundred and thirty paces on each side, and, as I before remarked, it has the appearance of a small city. The building was erected by the Emperess Helena, the mother of the first Christian emperor, and I might almost call her the mother of the Holy Land. Her pious heart sent her, with the same spirit which afterward

animated the crusaders, to search out the holy places referred to in the Bible, and when she found one, she erected a monument to mark it, for the guidance of future Christians; and the pilgrim may see the fruits of her pious labours from the mountain where God spake in thunder, down to the place where the cock crew when Peter denied his master. The convent is capable of containing several hundred people. It was originally built as a place of defence; but the necessity of keeping it fortified has passed away; a parcel of rusty guns are lying in a sort of armory, and a few small cannon are frowning from the walls. The cells of the monks, compared with any thing else I had seen in the East, are exceedingly comfortable; on one side, raised about a foot from the floor, is a stone platform, on which the monk spreads his mat and coverlet, and the furniture includes a table, chairs, sometimes two or three books, and the fragment of a looking-glass. There are twenty-four chapels erected to different saints, in which prayers are said regularly in rotation. I went through them, but saw nothing to interest me until I came to the church of the convent. Here I was surprised to find the handsomest Greek church I had seen, except in Russia; the floor and steps were of marble; and distributed around in various places were pillars and columns, the works of ancient artists, plundered from heathen temples, and sent to this lonely spot in the desert by the active piety of the early Christian emperors. The convent was raised in honour of the transfiguration, and the

dome of the altar contains a coarse but antique painting of the holy scene. In front, near the great altar in a coffin covered with rich palls, and a silver lid, are the bones of St. Catharine, the patroness of the convent. Among the chapels, one, I remember, is dedicated to Constantine and Helena, and another to Justinian and his wife; but the great object of interest is the holy of holies, the spot where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. A chapel is now erected over it, and the pilgrim, on entering, hears at this day almost the same words which God addressed to Moses, "Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou treadest is holy ground;" I pulled off my shoes and followed my conductor. The place is now bedizened with Grecian ornaments; the rude simplicity of nature which beheld the interview between God and his servant is utterly gone, and the burning bush is the last thing one would think of on the spot where it grew. There are but few objects of interest besides. In one of the chapels are a copy of the Evangelists, written in letters of gold by the Emperor Theodosius, and portraits of the four evangelists and the twelve apostles, and all the psalms of David, written in an inconceivably small space by a young virgin who came out and died in the desert.

The condition and character of the monks formed a subject of no little interest for my speculating observation, and I investigated their habits and dispositions as closely as bienséance and my inability for conversing with them, except through an inter-

preter would permit. So far as I could judge, they seemed perfectly contented; but they were, for the most part, mere drones and sluggards, doing little good for themselves or others, and living idly upon the misapplied bounty of Christian pilgrims. I do not mean to say that they were bad men. Most of them were too simple to be bad; and if there was evil in their nature, they had no temptation to do evil; and, after all, the mere negative goodness which does no harm is not to be lightly spoken of, in a world so full of restlessness and mischief as this of ours. Many of them had been a long time in the convent, some as much as twenty or thirty years, and one, who was now a hundred and five years old, had been seventy-five years worshipping the Lord, after his fashion, at the foot of Sinai. Among them were a baker, shoemaker, and tailor; they baked, cooked, made and mended for themselves, and had but one other duty to perform, and that was four times daily to kneel down and pray. Nothing could be more dull, quiet, and monotonous than their lives, and none but the most sluggish or the most philosophic spirit could endure it. They were philosophers without showing it, and dozed away their existence in one unvarying round of prayer, and meals, and sleep. Their discipline was not rigid, save in one particular, and that a matter in regard to which there has been much discussion with us; they never ate meat; no animal food of any kind is permitted to enter the walls of the convent. During all the various periods of their abode in the convent, some thirty, some forty,

and one more than seventy-five years, not one of them had eaten a particle of animal food; and yet I never saw more healthy-looking men. Hardier men I have seen, for they are indolent in their habits, take but little exercise, and in most cases show a strong disposition to corpulency; but I had some little opportunity of testing their ability to endure fatigue, and though the superior soon walked himself out of breath, the monk who guided us up the mountain, and who was more than sixty years old, when we descended, after a hard day's labour, seemed less tired than either Paul or myself. I am aware that climate may make a difference; but, from my own observation and experience, I am perfectly satisfied that even in our climate, invalids and persons of sedentary habits, and, indeed, all except labouring men, would be much benefited by a total abstinence from animal food. I have travelled for a week at a time, night and day, not under the mild sky of the East, but in the rough climate of Russia, and found myself perfectly able to endure the fatigue upon bread and milk diet; and I have been told that the Tartars who ride post from Constantinople to Bagdad, in an incredibly short time, never sleeping, except on horseback, during the whole of their immense journey, rigidly abstain from any thing more solid and nutritious than eggs.

The night of my return from the top of Sinai, I was awake when the bell tolled for midnight prayers, and, wrapping myself in my Arab cloak, took a small lamp in my hand, and, groping my way

along the passage, descended to the chapel, where the monks were all assembled. I leaned behind a protecting pillar and watched their proceedings; and it was an event of no common interest, thus, at the dead hour of night, to be an unobserved witness of their sincerity, and earnest though erroneous devotion. There was not one among them who did not believe he was doing God good service, and that his works would find acceptance at the throne of Grace, and obtain for him that blessed immortality which we are all seeking.

CHAPTER XVI.

Diet of the Monks.—Advantages of Abstinence.—Scruples overcome.—A mysterious Brother.—The Convent Burial-place.—Strange Charnel-houses.—Death in a Mask.—Familiarity breeds Contempt.—A Man of two Centuries.—Doubts and Fears.—Parting Gifts.—The Farewell.

The next day was Sunday, and early in the morning the superior sent for me to come down and take my meal with the holy brotherhood. The monks were all at the table, and it was the first time I had had so good an opportunity of seeing them together. They were about thirty in number, mostly old men with long white beards, all Greeks, and some with faces as noble as Grecian chisel ever traced. There was not a beard at table less than eight inches long; and my own,

though it would have been rather distingué at home, blushed more than its natural red at its comparative insignificance. The table was a long naked board, the vessels were all of metal, and before each man were a wooden spoon, and a drinking-cup in the form of a porringer. It was Lent, the season of forty or fifty days' fasting, during which even fish, eggs, and oil are prohibited. A large basin of boiled beans was set before each of the monks; and besides this there were black olives, beans in water, salad, vinegar, salt, dates, and bread. My companions had never been pampered with luxuries, and ate their bread and beans with as keen a relish as if they were feasting on turtle and venison, and drank their water as freely as though it was Tokay or Burgundy. The meal was eaten in silence, all appearing of opinion that they came simply to eat; and the only unusual circumstance I remarked, was the civility of my immediate neighbours in pushing the tempting viands before me. It was curious to see how they found the way to their mouths through such a wilderness of beard, and the spoon disappearing in a huge red opening, leaving the handle projecting from a bush of hair. The room in which we ate was perhaps sixty feet long, having at one end a chapel and altar, and a reading-desk close by, in which, during the whole of the meal, a monk was reading aloud from the lives of the saints. After dinner the monks all rose, and wiping their mouths, walked in a body to the foot of the altar, and two of them commenced burning incense. One of my

neighbours took me by the hand, and led me up with them. There they kneeled, prayed, and chanted, and went through a long routine of ceremonies, in which, so far as it was practicable, they carried me with them. They could not get me up and down as fast as they moved themselves, but they flung the incense at me as hard as at the worthiest of them all. I supposed this to be a sort of grace after meat, and that there it would end; but, to my surprise and great regret, I found that this was merely preparatory to the administration of the sacrament. It was the second time I had been placed in the same situation; and a second time, and even more earnestly than before, I wished for that state of heart which, according to the notions of its solemnity in which I had been brought up, would have permitted me to join in the sacred rite. I refused the consecrated bread, and the monk, after pausing some moments, apparently in astonishment, passed on to the next. After he had completed the circle, the superior crossed and brought him back again to me; I could not wound the feelings of the good old man, and ate the consecrated bread, and drank the wine. May God forgive me if I did wrong; but, though rigid censors may condemn, I cannot believe that I incurred the sin of "the unworthy partaker" by yielding to the benevolent importunity of the kind old priest. After this we walked out on the terrace, under the shade of some venerable grapevines, and sitting down along the wall, took coffee.

The reading-desk was brought out, and the same monk continued reading for more than two hours.

I had noticed that monk before; for he was the same who had conducted me through the church, had visited me in my room, and I had seen him in his cell. He was not more than thirty-five, and his face was as perfect as art could make it; and the sunbeams occasionally glancing through the thick foliage of the vines, and lighting up his pale and chiselled features and long black beard, made him one of those perfect figures for a sketch which I had often dreamed of, but had never seen. His face was thin, pale, and emaciated; the excitement of reading gave it a hectic flush, and he looked like a man who, almost before the spring-time of life was over, had drained the cup of bitterness to its dregs. If I am not deceived, he had not always led so peaceful and innocent a life, and could unfold a tale of stirring incident, of wild and high excitement, and perhaps of crime. He was from the Island of Tenos, but spoke Italian, and I had talked with him of the islands of Greece, and the ports in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, with many of which he seemed familiar; and then he spoke of the snares and temptations of the world, and his freedom from them in the convent, and, above all, of the perils to which men are exposed by the wiles and witcheries of the sex; and I could not but imagine that some beautiful Grecian girl, not less false than fair, had driven him to the wilderness. One of the other monks told me that it was about the time when the last of the pirates were swept

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from the Mediterranean, that the young islander had buried himself in the walls of the convent. They told me, too, that he was rich, and would give all he had to the fraternity. Poor fellow! they will soon come into possession.

In the garden of the convent is the cemetery of the monks. Though not of a particularly melancholy humour, I am in a small way given to meditation among the tombs; and in many of the countries I have visited, the burial-places of the dead have been the most interesting objects of examination. The superior had promised to show me his graves; and something in the look of the reader reminding me of death and burial, I now told the old man of his promise, and he hobbled off to get the key; for it appeared that the cemetery was not to be visited without his special permission. At the end of a long arbour of grape-vines, a narrow staircase cut in the rock, which I had not seen before, led down to an excavated square of about twenty feet; on the left of which was a small door opening into a vault, where formerly the bodies of the dead monks were laid on an iron bedstead, and there suffered to remain until all the corruptible part was gone, and only the dry bones remained. Now they are buried for about three years, or as long as may be necessary to effect the same object; and, when the flesh and muscles have disappeared, the bones are deposited in the great cemetery, the door of which is directly opposite. Within the door is a small antechamber, containing a divan and a portrait of some saint who wandered eighteen years

in the desert, without meat or drink. From this the door opens into the cemetery, which was so different from any I had ever seen, that I started back on the threshold with surprise. Along the wall was an excavation about thirty feet in length, but of what depth I could not tell. It was enclosed by a fence which was three or four feet above the ground, and filled with human sculls; and in front, extending along the whole width of the chamber, was a pile of bones about twenty feet high, and running back I could not tell how far. They were very regularly disposed in layers, the feet and shoulders being placed outward alternately, and by the side of the last skeleton was a vacant place for the next that should be ready.

I had seen thousands of Egyptian mummies, and the catacombs of Chioff, the holy city of Russia, where the bodies of the saints are laid in rows, in open coffins, clothed in their best apparel, and adorned with gold and jewels; and in that extraordinary burial-place I had seen, too, a range of small glasses in a dead stone wall, where wild and desperate fanatics had made their own tombs, with their own hands building themselves in an upright position against the walls, leaving a small hole open in front by which to receive their bread and water; and when they died, the small opening was closed with a piece of glass, and the body of the saint was left thus buried. I had seen the catacombs of the Capuchin convent at Syracuse, where the bodies of the monks are dried and laid in open coffins, or fixed in niches in the walls, with

their names labelled on their breasts; and in the vault of the convent at Palermo I had seen the bodies of nobles and ladies arranged upright along the walls, dressed as in life, the men with canes in their hands and swords by their sides; and the noble ladies of Palermo lying in state, their withered bodies clothed in silks and satins, and adorned with gold and jewels; and I remember one among them, who, if then living, would have been but twenty, who two years before had shone in the brigh tconstellation of Sicilian beauty, and, lovely as a light from heaven, had led the dance in the royal palace; I saw her in the same white dress which she had worn at the ball, complete even to the white slippers, the belt around her waist, and the jewelled mockery of a watch hanging at her side, as if she had not done with time for ever; her face was bare, the skin dry, black, and shrivelled, like burnt paper; the cheeks sunken; the rosy lips a piece of discoloured parchment; the teeth horribly projecting; the nose gone; a wreath of roses around her head; and a long tress of hair curling in each hollow eye. I had seen these things, and even these did not strike me so powerfully as the charnel-house at the convent of Mount Sinai. There was something peculiarly and terribly revolting in this promiscuous heaping together of mortal relics; bones upon bones; the old and young; wise men and fools; good men and bad; martyrs and murderers; masters and servants; bold, daring, and ambitious men—men who would have plucked bright honour from the moon,

lying pell-mell with cowards and knaves. The superior told me that there were more than 30,000 skeletons in the cemetery—literally an army of dead men's bones. Besides the pile of sculls and bones, in a chamber adjoining were the bones of the archbishops, in open boxes, with their names and ages labelled on them, and those of two sons of a king of Persia, who came hither on pilgrimage and died in the convent; their iron shirts, the only dress they wore on their long journey from their father's court, are in the same box. Other skeletons were lying about, some in baskets, and some arranged on shelves, and others tied together and hanging from the roof. In one corner were the bones of St. Stephen—not the martyr who was stoned to death at Jerusalem—but some pious anchorite of later and less authentic canonization. As to the effect upon the mind of such burial-places as this, or the catacombs to which I have referred, I can say from my own experience that they destroy altogether the feeling of solemnity with which we look upon the grave. I remember once in walking through long rows of dead, arranged like statues in niches of the wall, I remarked to the friar who accompanied me, that he promenaded every day among his old acquaintances; and he stopped and opened a box, and took out piecemeal the bones of one who, he said, had been his closest friend, and laughed as he pulled them about, and told me of the fun and jokes they two had together.

Returning to the convent and passing through

the great chapel, on the way to my room, I met one who, in the natural course of things, must soon be borne to the charnel-house I had just left. It was the aged monk of whom I have before spoken —he whose years exceeded by thirty-five the seventy allotted to man. I had desired an opportunity of speaking with him, and was curious to know the workings of his mind. The superior had told me that he had outlived every feeling and affection; that he spent all his time in prayer, and had happily arrived at a new and perfect state of innocence; and I remember, that after comparing him to the lamb, and every other emblem of purity, the good superior ended, with a simplicity that showed his own wonderful ignorance of human nature, by declaring that the old monk was as innocent as a young girl. It occurred to me that this might be a dubious comparison; but as I knew that the monastic life of the old eulogist, and his long seclusion from the world, had prevented him from acquiring any very accurate knowledge of young girls, I understood him to mean the perfection of innocence.

I looked upon the old monk with exceeding interest, as a venerable relic of the past. For more than seventy-five years he had wandered around the holy mountain, prostrating himself daily at the foot of the altar, and, with three generations of men, had sung the praises of God under the hallowed peak of Sinai. I approached him, and told him my pleasure in knowing so old and holy a man, and the wonder with which his story would be

heard in my own far-distant country. But the old man listened with impatience. The other monks were rather pleased when I stopped to talk with them, but he seemed anxious to get away, and stood, as I supposed, with his hand on his heart, as if pleading some religious duty as an excuse for his haste; but it turned out that he was merely complaining of the emptiness of his stomach, and was hungering for his evening meal. I was sorry to have the interesting picture I had conceived of this monkish Methuselah marred and effaced by so matter-of-fact an incident; but I describe him as I found him, not as I would have wished him to be.

Ever since I had left Cairo, I had been troubled with misgivings touching my ability to undertake the journey by Petra. I had hoped to recruit during my few days' residence at the convent, but I was obliged to acknowledge to myself that I was, to say the least, no better. The route through Idumea was difficult and dangerous, requiring all the energy of mind and body that perfect health could give; and a wrong movement from the point where I now was, might place me in a position in which the loudest cry of distress could never be heard. It is not necessary to inflict upon the reader all my hesitations; it is enough to say, that with one of the strongest efforts of resolution I was ever called upon to make, I abandoned my cherished project of visiting Petra and the land of Idumea; and, with a heavy heart, wrote to Mr. Gliddon that I was a broken reed, and was bound on the safe and direct road to Gaza. My kind friend

the superior would not hear of my leaving the convent; but I resisted his importunities, and laughingly told him I did not like that unchristian way of burial, cutting up and piling away a man's bones like sticks of firewood to dry. Finding me resolved, he took me to his room, and gave me from his little store of treasures some shells and petrifactions (which I threw away when out of his sight), engravings of Mount Sinai, and incidents of which it has been the scene, the rudest and most uncouth conceptions that ever were imagined, and a small box of manna, the same, as he religiously believed, which fed the Israelites during their sojourn in the wilderness. He gave me, too, a long letter, written in modern Greek, and directed to the governor of Gaza, certifying that I was a pilgrim from America; that I had performed all the duties of the pilgrimage, and was now travelling to the holy city of Jerusalem. The letter contained, also, a warm and earnest recommendation to all the Greek convents in the Holy Land, to receive and comfort, feed and clothe, and help and succour me in case of need. Last of all, he put on my finger a ring of the simplest form and substance, and worthy to accompany the palmer's staff of an older age. Every pilgrim to Mount Sinai receives one of these rings; and, like the green turban of the Mussulman, which distinguishes the devout hadji who has been to Mecca, among the Christians of the East it is the honoured token of a complete and perfect pilgrimage.

At eight o'clock in the morning the whole convent was in commotion, preparing for my departure. My old Bedouin guide had been out among his tribe, and arrived the night before with three times as many men and camels as I wanted, ready to conduct me to Akaba or Gaza. I took my leave of the holy brotherhood, who now sped me on my way as kindly and warmly as they had welcomed me on my arrival; and after a long and most affectionate parting with the good old superior, who told me that in all probability he should never see me again, but should always remember me, and begged me not to forget him—assuring me that there in the desert I always had a home, and telling me that if, when I returned to my own country, misfortune should press upon me, and I should find my kindred gone, and friends standing aloof, I must shake the dust from off my feet, and come back and live with him in the wilderness—I fastened the rope around me, and was let down for the last time to the foot of the convent-wall. A group of Bedouins, beggars, and dependants upon the charity of the convent gathered around, and invoked blessings upon me as I started. Twice since my arrival there had been rain. In that dry and thirsty desert, every drop of water falls upon the earth like a precious ointment, and "welcome," says the Arab, "is the stranger who brings us rain."

I turned my back upon the rising sun, and felt by comparison on my homeward way; but a

long journey was still before me; I had still to cross "the great and terrible desert" of the Bible, which spread before the wandering Israelites its dreary and eternal sands, from the base of Sinai to the Promised Land.

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